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ABSTRACT

This review examines whether immigrant Australians are disadvantaged educationally or vocationally by the education they receive, and whether their educational experiences are of a high quality and relevant to their needs. First, data is provided on the patterns of post-war immigration, along with information about the changing attitudes of Australian society toward immigrants. Then, a concept of educational disadvantage is presented, which incorporates elements regarding equality, equity, and cultural diversity. The aspirations and attitudes of immigrant Australians toward their schooling experiences are described; in general, immigrants' aspirations are high and their attitudes positive toward the schools in relation to native Australians. Examined next are teacher expectations and perceptions, the classroom interaction process, schools' ethnic policies, and schools' roles within the social structure might affect immigrants and contribute to social class inequalities. Two aspects of educational outcomes, retention rates and educational achievement, are considered. Retention and aspirations were found to be high, particularly among non-English speaking immigrants. Achievement was found to suffer at both the primary and secondary level, probably largely due to language related problems. Immigrant experiences with tertiary education are discussed. Immigrants appear to have high aspirations in this area as well, preferring universities and colleges over other institutions. Next is a discussion of how immigrant Australians approach the transition from school to work, and how well their educational achievements translate into vocational outcomes. Finally, a concluding section discusses problems with research on immigrant Australians. (CG)

IMMIGRANT AUSTRALIANS AND EDUCATION

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Andrew Sturman

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1 : INTRODUCTION

Immigrant Groups and Education

A nation's education system is designed to achieve a range of goals. These include the transmission of a body of academic knowledge, the inculcation of values, and, through the school's certification process, the filtering of students before tertiary education and employment. In the case of immigrants, because they bring to Australia distinct cultures which are key identifying characteristics, the education system has an added importance regarding its capacity to assist in, or to hamper, the maintenance of these cultural traditions. To a lesser or greater extent, therefore, different immigrant groups may perceive the importance of education not just in terms of the benefits that accrue from successful completion of the studies involved, but also in terms of the quality of the educational experiences they receive and the congruence between these experiences and their cultural expectations.

In the early 1970s, Smolicz and Wiseman (1971a) argued that, among the various factors which operate within the Australian education system in such a way as to handicap immigrant Australians, insufficient attention had been given to the tension which may arise in the home as a result of the confrontation of the ethnic culture of the parents with the culture which is instilled by the school, whether through the formal process of education or informally through the interaction of the child with his Australian peers.

Regardless of this tension, the education system is faced with the dilemma of having to provide an education to satisfy the needs of a range of very different cultural groups. To what extent should the cultural variety that immigrant groups bring be embraced as a means of enriching Australian and other cultures and to what extent should variety be lessened in an attempt to foster one relatively homogeneous group?

Bullivant (1981) has contended that in all countries where substantial immigration has occurred there have been, and continue to be, discussions and arguments about the nature of the society and how best to reconcile the legitimate claims of the nation-state with those of citizens from different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. This he described as the pluralist dilemma. Bullivant argued further that a major part of the debate has focused on education as this process is partly responsible for inculcating citizenship as well as individuality. It was the view of the Australian Commission of Inquiry into Poverty (Fitzgerald, 1976) that the Australian approach to the pluralist dilemma was working against the interests of non-English-speaking minorities. The Commission referred to what Martin (1971) has called 'devaluation' to describe a process whereby, instead of accommodating immigrant groups by giving their languages and cultures respect and recognition, official consensus in Australia had been to ignore as much as possible the distinctiveness of minority groups. Smolicz and Wiseman (1971a) saw the process of devaluation as basically a policy of 'indifferentism', a lack of interest in or recognition of different cultures.

As well as being an institution designed to foster individuality and citizenship, the Australian education system also purports to foster equal opportunities between individuals and groups. To what extent is it possible to pursue a policy of educational equality while incorporating cultural variety into the educational process? To what extent, in fact, has the goal of equality between groups been realized in Australian society? Or is it true, as has been argued (Australia. Schools Commission, 1975a; Fitzgerald, 1976), that immigrant Australians from non-English-speaking backgrounds are one group which do not receive the same benefits from education as other groups in society?

Purposes of the Review

This review seeks to examine the question of whether immigrant Australians are disadvantaged in connection with the educational experiences they receive. There are at least two aspects of this question, one concerned with educational or vocational outcomes and the other concerned with the quality and relevance of the educational experiences of immigrant groups.

Disadvantage is necessarily a relative notion. It may be used relative to perceived or accepted needs that individuals or groups have or it may be used relative to the experiences that other individuals or groups receive. In the latter interpretation 'disadvantage' becomes synonymous with 'inequality'. The concept of educational disadvantage is elaborated in Chapter 3, and in particular that chapter discusses how issues of equality and equity can be brought together into an extended notion of disadvantage.

The review is concerned with both the periods of compulsory schooling and the transition from school to work or further education. It seeks to answer three separate but related questions concerning education and immigrant groups:

1 How do immigrant groups approach education?
2 How do educational institutions respond to immigrant groups?
3 How well do immigrant groups perform in education?

In connection with the first of these questions, the review focuses on two main areas of interest: educational aspirations and expectations, and attitudes towards educational experiences. It might be expected that immigrants to Australia would have high educational aspirations. If this is so, the extent to which such aspirations are realized might well affect strongly the general satisfaction of immigrant Australians. It might also be hypothesized that the educational attitudes of immigrant students and their parents would reflect their notions of education and the extent to which they wish to retain certain cultural characteristics. The review addresses each of these issues.

The second question approaches the education of immigrant groups from the position of the educators. How do schools and other educational institutions respond to immigrant groups? Of relevance here are teacher attitudes towards immigrant Australians, the extent to which immigrant Australians may be channelled towards certain courses or career opportunities, and the extent to which the nature of the school experience (such as peer group interaction or teacher-student interaction) differs for immigrant groups. Each of these questions raises the important issue of access to educational opportunities.

The final question is concerned more directly with outcomes than processes. How do immigrant groups perform at school? Do immigrant groups remain at school for more or less time than other groups? Do they continue on to tertiary education to the same extent? Do they enter similar occupational fields as other students with equivalent educational qualifications?

Through reviewing research in these three broad areas, it is hoped to provide relevant statistical background data, to elucidate the factors related to whether immigrant groups have satisfactory and successful educational or vocational experiences, to highlight gaps in information or research, and to contribute to an important area of debate in Australian society.

2 : IMMIGRANTS TO AUSTRALIA: PATTERNS AND ATTITUDES

The chapters that follow seek to develop and incorporate an extended notion of educational disadvantage as it may apply to immigrant Australians. To provide a context for that discussion, this chapter provides some data on the patterns of post-war immigration, discusses the attitudes of Australian society towards immigrants, and defines the terminology to be employed in the review.

Patterns of Immigration to Australia

Australia is not unique in experiencing the effects of social and cultural changes brought about by large-scale immigration. Of western societies, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Great Britain have all, at different times, been profoundly affected by immigration. What is probably unique about Australia, however, is the pattern of immigration that has been experienced, particularly since the Second World War.

Table 2.1 provides information on the birthplaces of the Australian population as of 1978, the most recent year for which such data are available. Of a total population of 14.3 million, some 2.8 million or slightly less than 20 per cent had been born overseas. In addition, almost two million of those born in Australia had parents who themselves had been born overseas. In total, in 1978 some 4.8 million people (or just over one-third of the Australian population) could have been considered to be either first- or second-generation immigrants.

Table 2.1 also reveals something of the variety of ethnic origins of the Australian population in 1978. By far the largest proportion of first- and second-generation immigrant Australians (equivalent to around 2.2 million people) had ethnic origins in either the United Kingdom or Eire. Other sizable components were from the countries of Eastern and Northern Europe (about 500,000 people in each group), Italy (530,000 people), and Greece (320,000). The remaining 550,000 or so first- or second-generation immigrant Australians were from a large number of different regions, ranging in character from Asia, the Middle East, and the Americas.

The diversity of the ethnic origins of the Australian population can also be seen in the various stages of immigration since the 1940s. This is depicted in Table 2.2. In the years 1947 to 1951 the dominant migrant donor countries were the United Kingdom and Eire, and Eastern Europe; between 1951 and 1961 they were the United Kingdom and Eire, Northern Europe, and Italy; between 1961 and 1966 they were the United Kingdom and Eire, and to a lesser extent Greece; between 1966 and 1971 they were the United Kingdom and Eire, and to a much lesser extent Eastern Europe; between 1971 and 1976 they were again the United Kingdom and Eire, and to lesser extents Asia, America, and Oceania; and between 1976 and 1980 the predominant countries were from Oceania, Asia, and the United Kingdom and Eire. It was only during this latter period that United Kingdom and Eire immigrants were not the dominant group.

More recent data indicate that the dominant migrant donor countries for the years 1982 and 1983 were the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Vietnam (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1984). For the year ending 30 June 1982, the United Kingdom contributed 31 per cent of settler arrivals, New Zealand 10 per cent, and Vietnam 9 per cent. For the year ending 30 June 1983, the proportions were similar. In 1983 there was also a substantial increase in the number of immigrants from Kampuchea and Germany despite an overall decline in the number of settler arrivals.

This pattern of immigration has resulted in a great cultural as well as social mix. To take just one cultural facet, language, the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission (1984a) has estimated that 15 per cent of the Australian population aged 15 years or more (about 1.7 million people) have a primary language other than English.

Although the consistent flow of immigrants to Australia from the United Kingdom and Eire has provided one stable factor in the patterns of immigration, the gradual influx of immigrants from other very different areas has profound implications for a discussion of disadvantage. Apart from the obvious influence of English language proficiency on educational and vocational experiences, it is possible that the educational attitudes of, say, Eastern European refugees and settlers might be different from those of other European immigrants. Also, it might be expected that the relative educational and vocational life chances of immigrant groups would depend, in part, upon the extent to which their socioeconomic backgrounds and previous educational experiences differed. Finally, it might also be expected that not all ethnic groups would seek to the same extent to enhance or maintain their cultural traditions through the Australian education system.

It is perhaps inevitable that a pattern of immigration such as that

Table 2.1 Origin by Birthplace and Ethnic Origin of First and Second Generations in the Australian Population, 1978[a]

Origin	1st generation (birthplace) %	2nd generation (parents' birthplace) %	1st & 2nd generations (ethnic origin) %
UK and Eire	40.0	48.1	46.4
Eastern Europe	11.0	8.2	10.5
Northern Europe	9.9	10.6	10.4
Italy	10.2	12.2	11.1
Greece	5.5	6.2	6.6
Other Southern Europe	3.9	3.9	3.1
New Zealand	3.7	2.9	3.4
Middle East	4.1	2.6	2.9
Asia	6.3	2.8	2.4
Americas	3.0	1.4	2.3
Africa	1.6	0.7	0.8
Pacific	0.8	0.4	0.1
Generation total (persons)	2 807 000	1 986 000	4 793 000
Australian-born of Australian-born parents (i.e. third and later generations)			9 471 000
Total population			14 264 000

Source: Based on Price, 1983:18–19.

[a] First generation here means persons born overseas, except persons born of Australian-born parents.
Second generation means Australian-born with overseas-born parents, the paternal and maternal lines being averaged.
Ethnic origin is derived by adding the first and second generations and adjusting for instances such as Russians born in China, Britons born in India and so on.

Table 2.2 Net Immigration by Origin: Australia 1947 to 1980[a]

Origin[b]	1947-51 %	1951-61 %	1961-66 %	1966-71 %	1971-76 %	1976-80 %	1947-80 %
UK and Eire	36.1	28.9	49.5	43.3	40.3	19.9	36.5
Northern Europe	6.5	23.6	0.8	4.9	–	–0.4	8.9
Eastern Europe	38.2	8.5	6.5	13.3	5.1	6.1	13.3
Italy	7.2	20.5	9.4	5.0	–1.6	0.2	9.3
Greece	1.6	8.5	13.9	4.2	–1.5	–1.9	5.4
Other Southern Europe	2.3	4.4	6.1	2.1	5.2	1.2	3.8
Middle East	0.4	1.0	1.2	4.5	7.9	7.6	3.0
Asia	3.8	1.7	4.1	7.1	19.3	26.6	7.6
Africa	0.5	0.5	3.1	3.8	4.9	4.7	2.4
Americas	0.8	0.8	2.5	4.8	9.5	5.4	3.2
Pacific	0.2	0.4	0.9	1.0	4.3	3.5	1.3
New Zealand	1.4	1.2	2.0	6.0	6.6	27.1	5.3
Total net immigration	464 000	833 000	456 000	600 000	284 000	280 000	2 917 000

Source: Based on Price, 1981:10–11.

[a] Some percentages are based on estimates.

[b] 1947–1961 = Nationality; 1961–1980 = Birthplace.

which Australia has experienced would produce pressures on the host society, including educational pressures. These pressures would, of course, either be heightened or lessened according to the responses of Australian educational institutions and the wider Australian society.

Changing Attitudes towards Immigrant Groups

Martin (1978) has argued that until the early 1960s immigrant Australians were seen as 'assimilable' and this assimilation was considered possible without undue strain on themselves or undue change on the part of the Australian community. From the late 1960s and up to the early 1970s, it became increasingly clear that immigrant Australians faced problems in Australian society but these problems were seen mostly as arising from some inadequacy or unsuitability within the immigrant groups themselves. From the mid-1970s, immigrant Australians emerged as a minority pressure group with rights to power and participation. Martin contended that the first two stages emphasized the transient, marginal status of newcomers as immigrants, whereas the third stage conceived of culturally diverse groups as established, legitimate structures within Australian society and the term 'ethnic' replaced the more transitory term 'migrant'. It was during this stage that the concept of cultural pluralism, that is, of Australia as a multicultural society, became prominent as an opposing view to that of assimilation into an Anglo-Celtic society.

In examining the manner by which immigrant groups react to their new homeland and the manner in which the adopted country reacts to immigrant Australians, Smolicz (1981a) has suggested that a simple distinction between assimilation and multiculturalism may be unsatisfactory. He maintained that it is important to consider the degree to which different immigrant groups wish to retain their ethnicity. He termed this concept 'ethnic tenacity' and argued that a consideration of core values made it easier to understand varying degrees of tenacity. Some groups may hold certain values, such as religion or language, as central to their culture, and therefore would wish to maintain these above all else.

No matter how much 'ethnic tenacity' may vary from one immigrant group to the next, it would seem that multicultural pluralism is the current dominant ideology (Bullivant, 1981). This change in ideological attitude has been articulated in official reports such as those of the Commonwealth Schools Commission:

> Without acceptance and valuing of cultural diversity by majority as well as minority groups, there is little hope of progress towards the adoption of the concept of multiculturalism as a cornerstone in our society. Without respect

> by those in positions of influence of the right of individuals to hold different values and beliefs, there will be discrimination. If tolerance and respect are withheld, it will not be possible for minority groups to share power and influence in key decision-making. Thus, multiculturalism should foster the attitude that it is acceptable for people to have different points of view and lifestyles, and for people, working through democratic processes and institutions, to bring about changes which incorporate the best of all cultures, not simply those within the Anglo-Celtic tradition. (Australia. Schools Commission, 1981:15)

This ideological change has been paralleled by changes in educational responses to immigrant groups. Martin (1978) argued that during the assimilationist phase no action was forthcoming as it was assumed that immigrants to Australia would soon adapt to the educational demands placed upon them. Later, during the 'problem' phase, the federal government introduced the Child Migrant Education Program which focused on the teaching of English as a second language. During the present phase, which Martin described as 'participatory', policies have developed at federal and state levels to further multicultural ideals. Schools Commission initiatives in this regard have included:

- developing policies with the assistance and involvement of ethnic communities;
- supporting the teaching of community languages;
- funding 'ethnic schools'; and
- encouraging other multicultural initiatives at the school level.

Ideological standpoints and policy initiatives have, then, changed over time. However, these changes have not been implemented without resistance. For example, although the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council (1977) felt able to comment that equality depends on and strengthens multiculturalism and that multiculturalism depends on and strengthens equality, Bullivant (1981) articulated later concerns that the promotion of flourishing ethnic communities might interfere with the political goal of equality. Bullivant further argued that there is a possible contradiction between the notion of social cohesion and cultural pluralism. With respect to educational policy initiatives, the Schools Commission Report for the Triennium 1979–1981 (Australia. Schools Commission, 1978) conceded that confusion existed about the ramifications of accepting a multicultural philosophy and about what were the legitimate claims against Commission funds. In that particular report for example, the Schools Commission, while endorsing a multicultural philosophy, argued that its most urgent obligation was to students whose first language was not English.

Definition of Terms

As used throughout this study, the terms 'immigrant Australians', 'immigrant groups' and 'immigrants' refer to those members of the Australian population who were either born overseas or, if born in Australia, have parents who were born overseas. In the language of Table 2.1, it is those people classified as either first- or second-generation Australians who are encompassed by these terms.

It is important to note that 'immigrant' in this context does not necessarily entail a status of temporary citizenship. It is used simply as a shorthand means of distinguishing first- and second-generation members of the Australian population from those who were born in Australia of Australian-born parents. For want of a more descriptive term, these members of third and later generations are referred to simply as 'Australians'.

Much of the research on immigrant Australians has been stimulated by a concern that those from non-English-speaking backgrounds may suffer particular educational and vocational disadvantages relative to the rest of the population. Over time, the term 'ethnic' has come to be used as a general description of this group. Martin (1978) defined this term in the following manner:

> While a good case can be made for saying that all of us—Aborigines and whites, old and new—are ethnics (as ultimately we are all of migrant origin), I find it more useful to reserve the term 'ethnic' for groups and cultures of non-Anglo-Saxon background. By coupling 'ethnic' with 'minority', I try to convey the social and cultural distance between the majority, culturally dominant groups of Anglo-Saxon origin and the other groups. Aborigines are clearly an ethnic minority in these terms, but I trust that the context will ensure that 'ethnic minorities' are here understood to include only people of recent migrant origin (that is, immigrants and their Australian-born children). (Martin, 1978:16)

Where the term 'ethnic group' is used in this review, it is used in a manner similar to that defined by Martin, namely to include only first- and second-generation Australians of non-Anglo-Saxon or non-Anglo-Celtic background. To return briefly to Table 2.1, this definition essentially encompasses those with an origin in countries other than the United Kingdom, Eire, New Zealand, and North America. On this basis therefore, in 1978 some 2.4 million Australians (around one-sixth of the total population) could have been considered to be members of an ethnic group.

Perhaps of more interest than these rather global terms, however, are the particular definitions that individual researchers have employed to form the broad groupings of concern to their studies. The concept of student ethnicity provides a good example. A large number of studies have been concerned with the educational attitudes and performance of ethnic students. Is ethnicity best measured by language usage or birthplace? If the latter, is it the birthplace of the student or that of their parents which is most relevant?

In the main, the definitions that have been employed reflect the particular interests of the study concerned. Those interested in the relationship between cultural environment and education, for example, would be likely to pay particular attention to parental birthplace. On the other hand, those concerned with the effect of learning in a second language would be more inclined to see language usage in the home as the key identifying variable. However, in some instances the definitions that have been used appear to have been influenced more by the relative ease of data collection than by any explicit theoretical concerns.

The question of the criteria used to classify immigrant groups is of more than academic interest since the definitions can shape the interpretation of the research findings. Accordingly, in the process of reviewing studies it is important to draw attention to the measures involved (particularly in regard to ethnicity) wherever this information is available.

As a final comment on terminology, it is worth noting that the classifying measures that have been employed in most of the research studies tend to result in 'either-or' types of variables. Thus, for example, we find that students are classified according to whether or not English is the major language spoken in the home. This crude classification can mask considerable differences in the degree of English proficiency. It may even be that some students classed as English speakers have a weaker grasp of the language than those for whom English is not the prime home language.

Where relevant in the reviews that follow, the terminological aspects of research on immigrant Australians are elaborated. These discussions are brought together in the final chapter which considers them in the context of a general assessment of research on immigrants, and on ethnic groups in particular.

3 : AN EXTENDED CONCEPT OF EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE

This review is concerned with the issue of whether immigrant groups are disadvantaged in connection with the educational experiences they receive. It is possible to view the issue of disadvantage in a number of ways. How should it be determined? By drawing together elements from the debates concerning equality and equity in education in Australia and overseas, and by discussion of the concept of multiculturalism, an extended concept of educational disadvantage can be developed.

Equity and Disadvantage

Debate on issues of equity and equality of opportunity in Australia has moved through three distinct phases. Until the 1950s centralization, uniformity, standardization, and conformity were the major characteristics of Australian education (Butts, 1955). Frequently the defence against criticisms of these characteristics was that a standardized form of educational provision was equitable.

It became accepted during the 1960s and 1970s that such conformity and uniformity both constrained educational innovation and did not produce any noticeable equality of educational outcomes. There was a move towards individualized education and, with respect to equity between groups, it was accepted that equality of educational opportunity would require more than the provision of uniform, standardized educational facilities. At that time equality was seen essentially in terms of access to opportunities; it was accepted that different groups had different constraints upon them, however, and were therefore in need of special assistance.'

The most recent phase in this debate takes the view that equality of opportunity should be viewed in terms of both access and attainment. For example, the 1984 Commonwealth Schools Commission Report on Participation and Equity requires that schools and systems treat all children fairly and, as far as practicable, avoid policies and practices which advantage some social groups and disadvantage others. The notion of equity being advanced by the Schools Commission in this Report is not one that prescribes that every group or individual should be treated in the same way, but rather that less advantaged groups in the community should receive a fair share of the range of benefits education brings (Australia. Schools Commission, 1984:vii), and that the position of women and girls, and other under-represented groups such as Aborigines and some ethnic groups, should be given particular attention. As a concrete manifestation of these objectives, the Commission stressed that the goals of its Participation and Equity Program were to reduce significantly the number of students leaving full-time education prematurely and to foster more equal educational outcomes.

Two elements can be discerned in this statement concerning equity:

- stress is placed upon the relative positions of different groups in society as opposed to individuals; and
- benefits from education are perceived to include participation rates and equal outcomes (that is, opportunity and outcomes of opportunities).

Burbules, Lord, and Sherman (1982), although writing in the American context, have provided labels that can be used to describe the different phases of the equity debate in Australia. They distinguished 'formalism' (the first phase) from 'actualism' (the second phase), and argued that under a formalist view, opportunities should be equal: that is, the same for all. As long as conditions of access are relevant and identical, then opportunities are equal regardless of criteria of access. Actualism is more concerned with barriers that might restrict access. Consequently, this approach takes account of the ways in which people differ and the availability of compensatory alternatives. Greater emphasis is placed therefore on a fairness component of equity.

The third phase of the debate is represented by the view that opportunities are equal only when results are equal. Within this extended interpretation of equal opportunity, Burbules et al. discussed four approaches:

- Equal opportunities should be judged by equal results.
- Equal opportunities should be judged by equal progress from different starting points.
- Equal opportunities should be judged by the achievement of minimum standards.
- Equal opportunities should be judged according to the relative performance of different groups in society; that is, equal opportunities exist only when the proportionate representation of each significant group is constant through every achievement or outcome level.

This fourth approach is reflected in the Participation and Equity Program.

There are a number of implications from the preceding discussion for an examination of the educational experiences of immigrant groups. First, the concept of equal opportunity should be distinguished from equal outcomes. This does not deny the usefulness of investigating both concepts within a consideration of disadvantage, but it stresses the theoretical distinction between the two. Among the outcome measures which could be considered are:

- educational retentivity or participation;
- educational performance; and
- vocational attainment.

Second, within the consideration of equal opportunities it is essential to examine both access to opportunities and constraints upon that access. Among issues of access which would be important are:

- the range and quantity of institutions or jobs available;
- the range and quantity of courses taught;
- entrance qualifications;
- financial requirements of post-school study;
- the knowledge that students have about educational or vocational opportunities;
- the willingness of students to study or live away from home; and
- the aspirations, motivations, and other attitudes that guide students' or parents' behaviour.

Not all factors which affect access to education or work are culturally related. Some are related to national educational or economic policies, others to institutional policies, and still others are related to family circumstances such as socioeconomic status. However, it is possible that other factors, such as the willingness of students to study and live away from home and the knowledge that students have about different institutions and courses, might be affected by the cultural background of the family. It is also possible that the willingness of students or parents to suffer economic hardship to facilitate educational participation may vary across immigrant groups or between immigrant groups and Australians.

Third, although Burbules et al. argued that personal factors, such as motivation, family encouragement, and aspirations, which might affect access to opportunities, should not be seen as relevant to the definition of opportunity, a research review must consider these issues. For example, differences in educational retention rates between various groups in society may reflect attitudes or aspirations rather than differences in educational performance.

Fourth, within the actualist interpretation of equal opportunity, the extent to which different groups or individuals warrant compensatory treatment becomes important. Are there attributes of immigrant groups, such as language competence or cultural traditions, that deserve special attention or should the notion of compensatory education be centred around individual disadvantage? Within the actualist interpretation, an alternative definition, which postulates different routes of access to different equivalent goals, is also relevant to the study of immigrant groups. Are certain educational goals more appropriate to some groups than to others?

Multiculturalism and Disadvantage

There is another issue related to the consideration of educational disadvantage of immigrant groups which has not always been acknowledged in the debates concerning equity. This issue focuses upon the extent to which the Australian education system does or should respect and preserve the cultural diversity of students. In the context of participation and equity, the issue has been raised by the Schools Commission:

> Participation has much to do with the quality of the relationship between students, their parents and schools; the extent to which they share access to all the school or the system has to offer; and the degree to which the school curriculum, organization and climate for learning accords with their experiences, values, interests and aspirations. (Australia. Schools Commission, 1984:12)

This interpretation of participation means that an examination of disadvantage needs to consider attitudes of immigrant Australians to their educational experiences and it is within this consideration that the issue of multiculturalism becomes important. Although pursuit of a multicultural society implies much more than special educational provision, there can be no doubt that the type of curriculum taught in schools, the way it is taught, and to whom it is taught are all important elements of the debate on equity.

The Causes of Educational Inequality

Connell, Ashenden, Kessler and Dowsett (1982) have discussed four types of answer to the question: ‘What causes educational inequality?’

These are:

- differences between individuals;
- characteristics of families and schools;
- home-school relationships and class lifestyles; and
- the place of schooling in social structures.

Connell et al. acknowledged that each of these perspectives has relevance to a discussion of inequality although they argued that insufficient attention has been given to the last interpretation. In focusing more attention on this aspect, Connell et al. stressed the importance of historically developed arrangements which locate schools within social structures. Schools, they argued, are designed to sort and sift and so by definition are designed to produce inequality. However, the authors accepted that the school system has also attempted to do other things that contradict such an approach. They argued that, if 'reproduction' dominates, it is because that side of things has won against other tendencies and this has resulted from the historically developed structure of relationships between schools and their communities. Such relationships, it was argued, have developed in ways that give different social groups radically different capacities to fashion educational arrangements that are favourable to them.

Although this argument has more often been used in relation to the reproduction of social class inequalities, it is also possible that elements of special selection and treatment could occur with respect to immigrant groups. In any case, in the context of inequalities generally, even if such a process was directed more towards social class reproduction, this has important ramifications for all immigrant groups and especially for those which, because of the immigration policies adopted or because of circumstances occurring within Australia, now find themselves with large proportions of individuals from lower socioeconomic strata.

In Conclusion

The extended concept of educational disadvantage proposed earlier enables a consideration, where research evidence is available, of the four interpretations of inequality raised by Connell and his associates. Two questions raised in the introductory chapter, how immigrants to Australia approach education and how educational institutions respond to immigrant groups, are directly relevant to the first three interpretations of inequality raised by Connell et al. That the fourth perspective receives less consideration is not due to its lack of importance but to the shortage of studies which have approached educational inequality in this way. It is not simply that these issues have only recently become important in sociological research in Australia, but also that the subtlety by which the process of reproduction may occur often requires use of a variety of research methodologies, some of which have become acceptable in educational research only in recent years.

The concept of disadvantage explored in this review is multi-faceted. Included in the consideration of disadvantage are issues related to access to educational opportunities, outcome measures, and the extent to which certain personal characteristics might inhibit or encourage the taking up of opportunities which are available. Also included in the consideration of disadvantage are issues related to the quality of the educational experiences that students receive, and in particular how this relates to the pursuit of a multicultural society.

4 : IMMIGRANT GROUPS AND THEIR APPROACH TO EDUCATION

The extent to which students proceed through the educational system and perform satisfactorily depends upon a number of factors. Among these are the aspirations that students (and parents) have concerning future opportunities, the motivation that individuals bring to their educational experiences, their self-concepts, and the attitudes they form concerning their education. Therefore, the manner in which immigrant groups approach education has important consequences for a discussion of disadvantage.

Educational Aspirations

In considering the educational aspirations of students or their parents, the distinction between aspirations and expectations must be borne in mind: students or their parents may have high educational or occupational aspirations, but these may be unrealized for a variety of reasons. On the other hand, students' or parents' expectations may be very different from their aspirations. Differences between aspirations and attainment may reflect in part the unrealistic aspirations held by some students or by their parents (see Poole, 1983).

Several research studies have provided evidence concerning educational aspirations of immigrant groups. Probably the most extensive and detailed research has been carried out in a series of studies in Victoria (Taft, Strong, and Fensham, 1971; Fensham and Taft, 1973; Taft, 1975a, 1975b). Taft et al. (1971) examined the attitudes to post-secondary education of those students who had one or both parents born outside Australia and who had been included in a previous study of male students in the senior years of Victorian secondary schools in 1967. Of the original sample of over 6000, one-quarter fell into this category. It should be noted, however, that this study had a very unrepresentative sample: it included only males and only senior school students—that is, those who were more likely to be committed to a high level of educational attainment.

The study revealed marked variety in educational aspirations for, and eventual participation in, post-secondary education across different immigrant groups. The levels of educational aspiration were much less closely related to occupational background in some national groups than others, which suggested that a high level of aspiration was more a cultural trait than a function of occupational standing.

Males with parents originating in northern and western Europe were the least likely of any group to plan to study at university, and tended to show a preference for a skilled trade rather than an academic orientation. On the other hand, males from Polish families had very high educational aspirations and generally achieved these aspirations. In families in which both parents came from eastern European countries other than Poland, educational aspirations were also high, children did quite well at school, and were more likely to prefer studying at a college of advanced education compared with other groups.

In Italian and Greek families, where fathers were predominantly employed as semi-skilled or unskilled workers, male students' educational aspirations were still high. Italians were more likely to opt for university study while Greeks preferred technical or commercial study, often in a college of advanced education. However, because the academic performance of these children was relatively poor, the aspirations of many to enter tertiary education were frustrated.

The children of Asian parents shared their parents' high educational aspirations, usually with university in view. The school performance of the children, however, frequently did not match their high aspirations.

Subsequent studies of the educational and occupational aspirations of immigrant Australian students in Victoria were conducted to overcome some of the methodological weaknesses of the first study. In 1969 another sample was studied, comprising 592 male and 754 female students planning to leave school at the end of that year regardless of their year level (Taft, 1975b). The students were drawn from a representative sample of schools. Analyses were carried out in terms of the categories of Australian students, students from English-speaking immigrant backgrounds other than Australia (families with at least one parent born overseas), and students from non-English-speaking backgrounds (families with both parents born overseas, but in many cases students born in Australia). A very broad socioeconomic classification was used which distinguished working-class backgrounds (unskilled and semi-skilled workers), lower middle-class backgrounds (skilled and white collar workers), and middle-class backgrounds (professional, semi-professional, administrative workers, farm and business owners).

Plans to undertake higher study were more common among students from non-English-speaking backgrounds than among students in other groups. This was true for each of the three occupational rankings.

Anticipated participation in higher education correlated much more strongly with occupational status in the case of Australian students and students from English-speaking immigrant backgrounds than it did in the case of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds. In the non-English-speaking group, the proportion of students planning higher studies ranged from 36 per cent of working-class students to 44 per cent of middle-class students. For Australian students, the increase across these occupational groups was from 13 per cent to 43 per cent; for students from English-speaking immigrant backgrounds the corresponding rise was from zero to 25 per cent (Taft, 1975b).

The type of higher education planned also varied considerably according to background and occupational status. Very few students from either of the two immigrant groups had plans for going to teachers college. Colleges of advanced education, other than teachers colleges, were favoured equally by all groups, while university was the most popular goal of middle-class Australians, and of male students from non-English-speaking backgrounds regardless of their occupational background.

In 1971, another study was undertaken by Taft concerning the educational and occupational aspirations of different immigrant groups (Taft, 1975b). This study examined a Year 8 secondary school sample deliberately biased towards working-class and immigrant students; the sample size enabled a separate analysis of characteristics of particular national groups. One-sixth of the students from non-English-speaking backgrounds had arrived in Australia after the age of 11 years and these were treated as a special group (labelled 'recent immigrants') which, where appropriate, was considered independently of the remaining students from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

The results of this study were very similar to those of the 1969 school leaver study. The only differences were a small increase in the level of aspirations reported for male students of working-class non-English-speaking backgrounds, and a very high level of aspiration for tertiary education among middle-class female students from non-English-speaking backgrounds, which could have been due to the comparatively large proportion of Jewish students in that group. The aspirations of recent immigrants to Australia were, however, found to be relatively low.

Although the data collected in these Victorian studies are somewhat dated, more recent evidence indicates that aspirational patterns have probably changed little.

Other Studies

Evidence concerning educational aspirations of children from immigrant families is available from a large number of other studies (Berdie, 1956; Maddox, 1970; Brotherhood of St Laurence, 1971; Smolicz and Wiseman, 1971a; Blandy and Goldsworthy, 1975; Connell, Stroobant, Sinclair, Connell, and Rogers, 1975; de Lemos, 1975; Rosenthal and Morrison, 1978; Turney, Inglis, Sinclair, and Straton, 1978; Wolf, 1978; Wright, Headlam, Ozolins, and Fitzgerald, 1978; Browning, 1979; Martin and Meade, 1979; de Ferranti, 1980; Marjoribanks, 1980; Isaacs, 1981; Meade, 1981; Poole, 1981a; Williams, Batten, Girling-Butcher, and Clancy, 1981; Meade, 1983; Poole, 1983; and Ainley, Batten, and Miller, 1984a).

These studies generally confirm the previous evidence which indicates that adolescents from non-English-speaking backgrounds have relatively high educational aspirations, and stay on at school longer than their Australian counterparts. The studies also confirm the congruence between the aspirations of students and those of parents, report that parents of immigrant students often seem to offer more educational encouragement to their children than do Australians, and indicate that male students' aspirations, or the aspirations that parents of male students have for their offspring, are often higher than female students' aspirations or the aspirations their parents have for them.

Perhaps the most sophisticated examination in Australia of immigrant families and children's academic aspirations has been undertaken by Marjoribanks (1980), who explored the relationships between family environments, school-related attitudes, and cognitive performance of 11-year-old children from different 'eth-classes'. Marjoribanks argued that the concept of an eth-class, though not used extensively in educational research, represented an important social category. He defined the concept in the following way:

> The 'boundaries' of an eth-class can be pictured if a society is imagined as being stratified horizontally into social-status groups and also divided vertically into ethnic groups. Then those sections of the social space created by the intersection of the social status and ethnic group stratifications may be designated as eth-classes. (Marjoribanks, 1980:11)

Marjoribanks examined parental aspirations for their children because he argued that the family environment was an important factor in explaining inequalities in academic achievement. In particular, he argued that the social–psychological learning environment created by parents was a significant element of the cultural capital transmitted from families to children. Marjoribanks concluded that there were substantial differences between the learning environments of the different ethclasses he studied; that is, middle social-status Anglo-Australian families, and lower social-status families from Anglo-Australian, English, Greek, Southern Italian, and Yugoslavian immigrant groups:

> Typically, differences in levels of the family dimensions scores of English-speaking groups are characterized by . . . weak press for dependence, individualistic value orientations, moderate to low aspirations, and moderate to high achievement orientations. In contrast, the Greek and Southern Italian families exhibit . . . stronger press for dependence, more collectivistic value orientations, higher educational-occupational aspirations, and have moderate to lower achievement orientations, while the Yugoslavian profile represents in general, an intermediate position between the Anglo and non-Anglo groups. (Marjoribanks, 1980:61–62)

In a follow-up study of half the original sample of approximately 1000 families, when the children studied were aged 16 years, Marjoribanks (1984) examined the correlates of the educational and vocational aspirations of these children. Information was also available on the children's perceptions of parents' aspirations for them, the encouragement they had received, and the interest they considered their parents had in their education. Although immigrant group differences occurred, results indicated that adolescents' aspirations were related strongly to a set of family environment measures. The findings supported a general proposition advanced by Spencer and Featherman (1978:392):

> The encouragement of one's parents . . . appears to shape ambitions more directly and with greater impact than any other source. Their effects are stronger than the direct effects of one's scholastic aptitude on previous academic achievement, and much stronger than any direct influence from one's social origins per se.

Further information has been provided by Meade (1983) who analysed aspiration levels of different immigrant groups in a longitudinal study of students and parents in Sydney. Sixteen schools were originally included in the study and data were collected from students who were then in Year 9 (just over 3000 students). The concept of 'migrant' used in the study was based upon the country of birth of both parents, although details on the student's country of birth were also documented, as well as details on the age at which students who were born overseas arrived in Australia. In an attempt to assess the effects of ability on aspirations, the students' IQs were measured by the ACER Higher Test ML–MQ and the Standard Progressive Matrices. However, in those analyses where the IQs of different student groups were controlled, it would seem that the verbal test (ACER ML–MQ) was used and not the non-verbal test (Standard Progressive Matrices). It would have been preferable to have used a test which is less likely to be culturally biased. Bearing this in mind, after controlling for IQ and socioeconomic status, Meade found that the educational aspirations of students from families with non-English-speaking backgrounds were higher than those of other students. However, there were variations within the non-English-speaking group. In particular, Greek, Yugoslav, and Lebanese students had high aspirations, whereas Maltese students had low aspirations. This pattern occurred for both secondary school and post-secondary aspirations. Generally, the pattern of aspirations of parents and students were similar, although there was evidence that parents of some non-English-speaking groups had higher aspirations than their children. Variations between the aspirations of students with families from non-English-speaking backgrounds and English-speaking backgrounds were most noticeable in the lower IQ/lower socioeconomic status groups. This was, however, less noticeable for parental aspirations.

It is interesting to note that in a recent national study of factors affecting retentivity in 150 schools (Ainley, Batten, and Miller, 1984b) the researchers did *not* find that students whose parents were born in non-English-speaking countries had higher aspirations than other students. The authors acknowledged that this finding contradicted much research and were cautious about interpreting it. It may be that the Australian students' educational aspirations have been slowly rising to match those of the ethnic groups since there would seem to be no evidence that recent immigration patterns should have led to lower educational aspirations for the ethnic groups.

Other studies have indicated that there may be sex differences operating to affect aspiration patterns across groups. In a recent study of factors affecting retention rates in Victorian government secondary schools, Ainley, Batten, and Miller (1984a) examined the aspirations of students in Year 10 in sixteen schools. Three categories of ethnicity were used, based on the birthplace of the students' fathers; that is, those born in Australia, those born in English-speaking countries other than Australia, and those born in non-English-speaking countries. Although the students from non-English-speaking backgrounds were more likely to intend to remain at school than their peers whose fathers were born in Australia, the association between ethnicity and the intention to remain at school was stronger for males than females (see also Young, Petty, and Faulkner, 1980).

Socioeconomic Status, Ethnicity, and Aspirations

Although much research has indicated that for ethnic groups socioeconomic status did not appear to be a key predictor of educational aspirations, Anderson and Vervoorn (1983) have cautioned against dismissing the importance of status or class. They refer to the 1973 survey carried out by the Australian Population and Immigration Council which revealed that almost one-third of immigrant Australians working in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations had overseas qualifications of some sort. Seven per cent of immigrant Australians with university degrees or higher qualifications obtained overseas worked in an unskilled or semi-skilled capacity, as did 21 per cent of those with other tertiary qualifications and 34 per cent of those qualified at technician level. Large differences were also found between particular immigrant groups. In the case of immigrants from Greece, Yugoslavia, and Lebanon, the proportions 'underemployed' in this way were estimated as 48 per cent, 47 per cent, and 44 per cent respectively, while for New Zealand, Britain and Ireland, and West Germany the proportions were 19 per cent, 28 per cent, and 28 per cent respectively (Australian Population and Immigration Council, 1976). Similarly, Blandy and Goldsworthy (1975) found that, although immigrant Australians tended more often than Australians to have manual jobs, their educational level was, if anything, higher.

Smolicz and Wiseman (1971b) have provided one possible explanation of this phenomenon. They noted that immediately after World War II it was Australian policy to give top priority to manual workers when selecting people from 'displaced persons' camps to fill gaps in the economy. As a result, it is possible that some people with professional qualifications might have got to Australia by camouflaging their background. However, Smolicz and Wiseman did not believe that submerged middle-class influences could explain differences in group performances and they referred to both the high regard in which education and 'culture' are held in central and eastern Europe and to what they called 'migrant drive' which was reflected in a great desire to encourage their children's educational pursuits.

As far as educational aspirations are concerned, later immigrants to Australia from non-English-speaking backgrounds regardless of their social status background are not very different from those from eastern Europe. Also, there would appear to be no reason to suppose that their 'drive' to succeed would be in any way inferior to these earlier immigrant Australians described by Smolicz and Wiseman.

Motivation, Commitment, and Self-Concept

Motivation and commitment to future education are important predictors of educational attainment (see Knight, 1977; Poole, 1978; Rosier, 1978) and it is well documented that early school leavers generally lack self-confidence (Everett, 1971; Connell et al., 1975). Stroobant (1978), in fact, reported that self-esteem and associated personality factors appeared to have a closer association with the rejection or appreciation of education than did ability considerations, and Partington (1984) has suggested that self-concept has a greater effect on achievement than national identity.

Research into the effects of these factors on immigrant Australians' educational experiences is scarce. With respect to motivation or commitment to education, the limited research indicated that measures of commitment to school were similar across different eth-classes (Marjoribanks, 1980), but there were different patterns of achievement orientations between ethnic groups (Blandy and Goldsworthy, 1975; Marjoribanks, 1980). The study by Marjoribanks indicated that it was the 'Anglo' groups (English and Australian) that had the stronger achievement orientations.

With regard to self-concept, Connell et al. (1975) investigated the proposition that immigrant Australian students may have lower self-concepts than their Australian counterparts. Of all groups studied, the Southern Italians reported the lowest self-concept, while the British group was the only one to show a significantly superior score to the Australian on any measure and the general trend was for immigrant Australians to score lower on all measures. Some connection between good family relations and self-concept seemed to be operating, for in many cases (but not all) those identified as more alienated from their parents were scoring lower on the self-concept scale. However, there was also a relationship between language and self-concept; those speaking English least at home scored at a lower level.

In confirmation of these results, Poole (1981a) found that immigrant Australian adolescents tended to admit more failures and rated themselves at a lower level of general academic ability than did Australians. However, their self ratings in different curricular areas showed few differences and the performances of immigrant Australian adolescents were only marginally different from those of the Australian adolescents. This sample comprised nearly 800 adolescents from 32 secondary schools in Melbourne. The parents' country of birth was used as the definition of immigrant.

Moore and Rosenthal (1982) have discussed the particular problems relating to self-esteem that certain immigrant groups may experience. They noted that female Italian-Australians (defined as having both parents born in Italy and Italian being the home language) experienced stress in relation to being both Italian and female which may have produced self-image problems of a magnitude not easily amenable to change. This group did not seem to benefit from programs set up by schools that recognized the ethnic diversity of the student population. The sample was drawn from Years 9 and 11 of six Melbourne secondary schools and was devised to analyse the effects of school adaptation to ethnic diversity. Schools were selected to be similar on a number of variables used by education authorities to measure educational disadvantage.

Attitudes towards Schooling

There are at least three ways by which attitudes towards schooling may contribute to educational disadvantage. First, students' attitudes towards schooling may contribute towards decisions concerning retentivity or may affect performance. Second, in an educational climate where students are being encouraged to remain longer at school, there is an obligation to make the schooling experience satisfactory to students—that is, it is not only that the school climate is likely to affect retentivity, but also that schooling should be a satisfying experience in its own right. Third, the educational experience may be an important influence on the maintainence of cultural traditions.

Attitudes to Schooling, Retention, and Performance

Research into the association between attitudes towards schooling and educational performance or participation is sparse and conflicting. A number of studies indicate that early school leavers have more negative attitudes towards school than those that stay longer (see for example Tinney, Benn, and O'Neil, 1974; Poole and Simkin, 1976; Knight, 1977; Behrens, 1978; Malley and Kiraly, 1978; and Wright et al., 1978), but Rosier (1978) concluded that, when other factors were controlled, the association between liking of school and the tendency to remain at school decreased so markedly that in most of the Australian States this factor had virtually no net effect.

Marjoribanks (1980) has drawn particular attention to the role of parents' attitudes towards teaching and towards the school, as an influence on student performance. However, upon investigation, within each 'eth-class' there were few significant relationships between parents' satisfaction with aspects of schooling and academic achievement even when these relationships were examined at different levels of children's commitment to school and academic adjustment to school. On the other hand, once allowance was made for 'press for English' it was found that this acted possibly as a threshold variable: for Greek and Southern Italian children, the effects of parents' satisfaction on performance became more pronounced when there was a greater press for English in the home environment, and at each satisfaction level increases in press for English were also related to sizable increases in performance.

The concept of 'press' which was used in the Marjoribanks study was derived from the work of Murray (1938) who propounded the value of considering how individuals or groups perceive the environments in which they live. The press for dependence and English referred to by Marjoribanks represented attempts to measure respectively the importance that different family environments attached to allowing children independence and encouraging children in learning English.

Attitudes to Schooling and the Quality of School Life

At a very general level, research indicates that ethnic groups are less dissatisfied with their school experience than other students. For example, Connell et al. (1975), in a study of some 8000 Sydney secondary school students and 1100 teenagers who had left school, gathered information concerning interests, attitudes and values, relationships with parents, friends and teachers, self-feelings and self-perceptions, and the nature of intelligence and thinking. In their discussion of 'migrant youth', the authors used two criteria for categorizing immigrant Australians: students who had one or both parents born overseas and students who had parents born overseas, but who had themselves attended primary school in Australia. The latter definition was used to identify students who had been in Australia long enough to have felt the influence of assimilatory pressures and this definition was used as a criterion for obtaining second-generation immigrant responses. The analyses did not, however, allow for a separate treatment of sex and age within the different immigrant groups described.

Connell et al. referred to the possibility of cultural ambivalence of immigrant Australian students in that, outside the province of the school, the adolescent has a culture of his own which does not necessarily endorse all of the cultural values of the school. In addition, the immigrant Australian might find the 'old' culture dominant at home and at variance both with school and with the values of the Australian peer group. The authors argued that, if cultural ambivalence did affect second-generation immigrant students in high school, it could be expected to reveal itself in some degree of disenchantment with school generally. However, the findings did not reveal this. On all items aimed at testing the amount of generalized liking for school, the immigrant subsample as a whole scored higher than the Australians (see also Meade, 1983). Nevertheless, differences occurred across immigrant groups and those most in favour of the school experience were Germans, Yugoslavs, and Greeks and those less favourably disposed were the Dutch, Poles, and Northern Italians. Among second-generation immigrant students, only the Dutch disliked school as much as the Australians did. The authors generalized from their findings:

> Broadly speaking, the degree of acceptance of the school experience is in inverse proportion to the degree of cultural assimilation. (Connell et al., 1975:255)

In a more limited study, based on essays written by 175 adolescents from a wide range of immigrant backgrounds studying in 16 Sydney high schools, Sheppard (1978) reported similar findings to those of Connell et al. First-generation immigrant students held more conservative attitudes concerning high school than did Australians: they generally accepted the school system and the legitimacy of the teachers' authority, and were critical of dissident students. Education was seen as a pathway to future success and this success required acceptance of the school system.

Although these studies revealed that students from different ethnic backgrounds shared common general attitudes towards school, there were differences amongst students with respect to perceived benefits accruing from education. Connell et al. (1975) found that Italian and Maltese students valued education least and only Germans and Asians valued it more highly than did the Australians. Greeks, Yugoslavs, and Poles were more inclined to emphasize the more utilitarian aspects of education. Although these differences sometimes related to socioeconomic variables and to language spoken at home, they often seemed to reflect genuine cultural differences. Some support to this was provided by Jakubowicz and Wolf (1980) who found that Greek parents perceived the benefits from education more in economic terms and Portuguese parents saw them more in social participation terms. This particular study involved interviews with 210 immigrant parents in Port Kembla.

On particular aspects of schooling, as opposed to general attitudes towards education, immigrant Australian students tend to be more critical than Australians. Connell et al. (1975) reported, for example, that Southern Italian students were more critical than any other group of students of the large number of subjects they had to study which they did not like. In fact, the immigrant Australian students on the whole were more likely to find fault in the actual content of education but the differences compared with Australians were only statistically significant for the Italian subgroup. Immigrant Australians in this study also desired earlier specialization in core subjects, and considered there was too little emphasis on science. They were, however, less critical of the methods of teaching and organization; for example, only the German group was more likely than the Australians to consider that there was too much stress on examinations. There were differences however within the immigrant group: the Yugoslavs, Italians, and Asians were the most reluctant to criticize these aspects of education. The study also revealed that immigrant students were substantially less in favour of increased student responsibility than were the Australians even though generally all students wished for more responsibility.

Other research has confirmed that a number of ethnic groups have a relatively conservative approach to schooling. Many ethnic groups offer strong support for homework provision (Holdsworth, 1975; Taylor, 1978; de Ferranti, 1980; Jakubowicz and Wolf, 1980), prefer more strictness in school (Noble and Ryan, 1976; Cummings, 1978; Taylor, 1978; Jakubowicz and Wolf, 1980; Young et al., 1980) and, while accepting the value of non-traditional activities, do not wish that these activities should take priority over the traditional learning areas (Jakubowicz and Wolf, 1980).

A further attitudinal issue which has received considerable attention in research on ethnic students is that of home-school contacts. There is evidence that many ethnic groups feel isolated fom the school and this was generally attributed to language problems, parental lack of confidence, or inadequate school policies in relation to their communities (Brotherhood of St Laurence, 1971; Smolicz and Wiseman, 1971a; Australia. Department of Education, 1975; Taylor, 1978; Faulkner, Lo Bianco, and Storer, 1979; de Ferranti, 1980; Jakubowicz and Wolf, 1980; Meade, 1981). For example, in the 1980 Jakubowicz and Wolf study, the Macedonian group seemed the most isolated, the Italians also lacked the confidence to approach the school as a result of their language difficulties, and there was a general feeling by the ethnic groups that they would have liked more contacts and information about school activities.

Attitudes to Schooling and Cultural Pluralism

Smolicz (1981b) argued that cultural maintenance must be studied in relation to the nature of each culture and its core values, and as a result the mechanism adopted for the preservation of one culture would not necessarily be suitable for another. Smolicz contended, therefore, that as far as education was concerned courses in ethnic languages would be important for the maintenance of language-centred cultures, but for cultures centred on other core values courses that concentrated upon these values would be more valuable. Smolicz argued, however, that it was the elimination of ethnic languages which represented the greatest danger to the cores of most minority cultures.

Research into these issues is complex and contradictory. On the basis of research in which Smolicz was involved, it has been argued that many immigrant children never master reading and writing in their ethnic languages and that a stable bilingualism is a rarity (Smolicz and Harris, 1977; Smolicz and Lean, 1979; 1980; Smolicz, Lean, and Secombe, 1980). Smolicz and Secombe (1981), in a study of Polish children, found that decline in ethnic language maintenance was not the result of a deliberate rejection of, or indifference to, Polish but was related to the circumstances in which different languages were activated and developed. A continuing positive attitude to the mother tongue and to studying it at school was reported (cf. Jakubowicz and Wolf, 1980; Smolicz and Lean, 1980; Smolicz, 1983).

However, Smolicz and Lean (1980), in a study of the attitudes of parents of all Year 10 students in South Australian Catholic secondary schools, revealed the presence of a substantial number of immigrant Australians who, by their rejection of ethnic language maintenance, unambiguously adopted what the authors called a 'dominant monolingualism'. Although these individuals were generally from within the British-Irish-Australian categories, there was a small number of children from ethnic groups who displayed a monolingual orientation (see Smolicz, 1983, for evidence of the rejection by some Italian girls of their language heritage). A similar pattern of responses was revealed concerning attitudes towards the provision of bilingual/bicultural schools. The ethnic groups most strongly favouring cultural maintenance through these means were the Italians, Poles, and Germans. In other studies reviewed by Smolicz and Lean (1980), it was found that student support for bilingualism was very high, and much greater than parent support, and that teachers in training also expressed strong support for ethnic language teaching.

Other studies have revealed the complexity of ascertaining attitudes concerning language issues. Marjoribanks (1980) has indicated that parental attitudes varied according to the age of the students who would be receiving language education and according to the ethnic group to which they belonged. In answer to a hypothetical question concerning the teaching of English or ethnic languages to children aged 10 who arrive in Australia from non-English-speaking countries, approximately 60 per cent of parents in three Anglo groups suggested that ethnic children should attend ordinary classes within local schools but should also be offered some special English teaching. The non-Anglo groups were on the whole less likely to respond this way although over half of the Southern Italians shared this view. With respect to the different ethnic groups, 61 per cent of the Greek parents indicated that such students should be taught English primarily in special classes either in special or local schools. Only 38 and 45 per cent of Southern Italian and Yugoslavian parents respectively supported this view. In contrast, 23 per cent of Yugoslavian and 10 per cent of Southern Italian parents suggested that no special provision should be made. There was little support from any group that children should be taught mainly in their own language.

In answer to a similar question concerning the treatment of children aged 5 or 6 from non-English-speaking backgrounds, either newly arrived immigrants or students who had been in Australia for most of their lives, a different pattern of responses was revealed. Concerning recently arrived young children, more Anglo parents than non-Anglo parents favoured a curriculum that was taught primarily in the language of the child. Only about 5 per cent of parents from each of the non-Anglo groups supported this view. Yugoslavian parents were particularly likely to favour all teaching in English. Generally, however, all the different eth-classes (with the exception of the English group) supported an orientation which gave equal or nearly equal importance to two languages as the medium of instruction. Concerning students who had lived in Australia nearly all of their lives, the Anglo parents were strongly supportive of the notion that students should be taught totally or mainly in English. There were marked differences between Anglo and non-Anglo parents. Greek and Southern Italian parents were strongly in favour of the maintenance of their own languages, far more so than the Yugoslavian parents. A significant proportion of non-Anglo parents expressed support for a curriculum orientation in which English was not the dominant medium of instruction. When a more stringent test of this finding was applied by asking a question concerning what language children aged 10 or 11 from non-Anglo Australian families should be taught, the findings were very similar, indicating that a significant proportion of parents, especially from Southern Italy, supported a bilingual school program. Greek parents were less likely to support such a view, as were Yugoslavian parents, and Marjoribanks argued that for the Greeks this may reflect the opportunity they have for study in extra-school programs.

The evidence from Marjoribanks that the non-Anglo groups were very supportive of the learning of English was confirmed in a study of the Commonwealth Contingency Program (Spearritt and Colman, 1983). Students in this program, which was designed to assist the education of Indo-Chinese refugees, were very strong in their support of the importance of learning English, and the use of English as the medium of instruction.

The most recent data on attitudes towards aspects of language are available from a study being conducted by Piper and Miller. In an interim report (Piper and Miller, 1984) the authors described the attitudes concerning language education in junior secondary schools of an Australia-wide sample of 650 students, parents, and teachers. Questions were asked about the teaching of 'traditional' modern languages, such as French or German; classical languages; 'community' languages, such as Italian or modern Greek; 'trading' languages, that is languages of Australia's trading partners; first languages; and 'neighbour' languages, that is the languages of Australia's neighbours.

There was little support within the school community for the introduction of bilingual programs into the junior secondary school curriculum, but the role of languages other than English was seen as firmly established. Traditional foreign languages, community languages, and mother tongue maintenance were seen as having priority with also some support for teaching the languages of our trading partners. All groups attached emphasis to gaining verbal fluency as opposed to concentration on learning to read and write a language other than English.

In a more recent report, Piper and Miller (forthcoming) revealed that there were far greater similarities in the attitudes of different groups in the school community (that is teachers, students, and parents) concerning foreign language education than there were differences. The parents from non-English-speaking backgrounds, for example, held very similar views to those from English-speaking backgrounds: in general both groups believed that, although the teaching of languages other than English should be available, it should be optional. Specifically, both groups accorded high priority to the teaching of traditional foreign languages in the curriculum and some priority to the teaching of community languages. On the other hand, although both groups accorded some priority to the teaching of languages of our trading partners, parents whose mother tongue was English considered this more important. Conversely, although both groups accorded some priority to mother tongue maintenance, it was, predictably, the parents whose mother tongue was not English who considered this the most important. It was also found that the strongest support for the teaching of different languages came from the teachers, and most surprisingly, perhaps, it was the students from English-speaking backgrounds who were most in favour of the teaching of languages other than English.

The majority of research concerning issues of cultural maintenance has concentrated upon language issues. The little research available on other more general issues is not easy to interpret. Smolicz and Lean (1979) found very little support from parents from any ethnic group in South Australia for the statement that 'immigrants and their children should forget their native cultures and learn to behave like Australians as soon as possible'. However, in a question concerning the teaching of the history, geography, culture, and language of different countries, Marjoribanks (1980) found that most parents from Anglo and non-Anglo backgrounds believed the school should concentrate on the study of Australia or other English-speaking countries and not upon ethnic cultures.

Summary

This chapter has sought to examine the aspirations and attitudes of immigrant Australians concerning their schooling experiences and educational futures. Although it is not easy to generalize findings across such a variety of immigrant groups, there were nevertheless considerable consistencies in the evidence from the research. Across all socio-economic groups, with a few exceptions, the aspirations of immigrant Australians tended to be extremely high. These aspirations were rarely lower than those of the Australians and often significantly higher. However, as not *all* immigrant groups have the same high aspirations the evidence suggests that a cultural factor is operating.

The research evidence also indicated that the high level of aspirations of the immigrant Australians from non-English-speaking backgrounds did not extend as strongly to females as it did to males, and certain groups, such as Italian females, seemed to have very low educational aspirations.

It is difficult to generalize from the findings of studies on attitudes, because of the differences that have been reported across different immigrant groups. Overall, it would seem that immigrant students have a more favourable view of school than other students. On particular aspects of schooling less positive attitudes were obvious with a number of parents of immigrant students reporting dissatisfaction with school discipline, and support for retention of traditional subjects. Although immigrant Australians favoured involvement in school decision making they were less likely to see the lack of this involvement as a major problem than were Australian students. The research also indicated that many parents of immigrant students saw present levels of home-school interaction as inadequate.

On the important issue of language teaching, research is less easy to summarize since opinions vary across the immigrant groups. For example, Yugoslav parents appeared less committed to ethnic language maintenance in the school than the Greeks or southern Italians. There is little support for the suggestion that bilingual education would be favourably received by all students, teachers, or parents, and indeed on certain issues it would appear that it was the Australian-born population that saw the most value in community language education. Certain immigrant groups, especially recent arrivals, favoured a particular emphasis on the teaching of English.

Linking together the findings from the research into aspirations and attitudes, it is clear that immigrant Australians are generally committed to education, and mostly committed to achieving on the terms laid down by Australian educators rather than seeking to have a curriculum geared to their own special needs. However, this is not to deny that many immigrant Australians favoured some inclusion of cultural or ethnic studies within the curriculum, and some immigrant groups strongly supported the teaching of ethnic languages within the school.

5 : THE RESPONSE OF SCHOOLS TO IMMIGRANT GROUPS

In a discussion of factors that can contribute to educational and social inequalities, a greater recognition of the role that the school and other educational institutions play has developed. In some ways this is a reaction to an earlier focus of attention upon factors within individuals which may contribute towards inequality. Unfortunately, research into the processes by which the structure of schooling may contribute towards inequalities is sparse in Australia, and in connection with the particular effects of the schooling process on immigrant Australians, evidence is only limited.

With these qualifications in mind, this chapter examines the impact of school processes and structures on immigrant Australians. In particular, it examines research into the effects of teacher expectations and perceptions, the classroom interaction process, schools' ethnic policies, and the place of schools within social structures. Another issue of relevance to the impact of schools on different groups is the manner by which students are assisted in the transition from school to tertiary study or work. This issue is examined in Chapters 7 and 8 respectively.

Teachers and Immigrant Groups

The expectations or perceptions that teachers have of different immigrant groups or individuals may be an important factor affecting the attention that students receive and the curricular tracks they follow. However, much of the research into the effects of teachers on students has concentrated upon how students of different socioeconomic backgrounds may become locked into certain educational experiences and not specifically upon immigrant groups (see Keddie, 1971, for research in the United Kingdom and Dreeben, 1967, and Bowles and Gintis, 1976, for research in the United States). In Australia, Knight (1974) has postulated that the school influences students in different ways depending upon their background and status:

> Schools as they are presently organized through rules, expectations, rituals and practices ensure that a certain percentage of students will be alienated from the system. These students are often characterized by race, class, sex and ethnic differences. (Knight, 1974:113)

Knight argued that structural determinants of school failure include streaming and its consequent labelling. Knight also argued that a teacher's estimation of a student's ability has a strong influence on motivation and self-esteem, and that teachers expect less of low status students and teach accordingly (see also Tinney et al., 1974; Wassel, 1976; Williams, 1976; McGaw, Warry, Varley, and Alcorn, 1977; Turney et al., 1978).

Some support for this view concerning teacher expectations of immigrant Australians can be found in a major longitudinal study conducted in Sydney (Martin and Meade, 1979; Meade, 1981, 1983). Martin and Meade argued:

> Once allocated to the lower streams (which may be on the basis of performance in English or language-based tests), migrant students (probably more so than others) have little chance of moving into the top streams: teachers think that they are doing their duty in trying to make such students realistic about their chances of future education and jobs . . . . On the other hand, migrant students who are defined as bright seem, on our evidence, often to attract all the attention and encouragement that they want from teachers. (Martin and Meade, 1979:17)

The authors argued that the conformist behaviour adopted by many immigrant students, including a strong motivation to succeed, might help to elicit this behaviour.

Some evidence concerning the perceptions of teachers towards immigrant students is also available . As part of a masters thesis, Gillett (1981) analysed teachers' perceptions of children's ethnicity and educational capabilities. There were clear differences in teachers' assessments of children according to their perceptions of the children's ethnicity. With respect to assessments of students' 'teachability' (which referred to such things as study habits), discipline problems, and 'moral acceptability' (politeness and the like), the students who were perceived to belong to ethnic groups received less favourable judgments than did other students. Despite considerable limitations in design, this study provides some support for the proposition that poor student performance might result in part from teacher stereotyping (see Jensen and Rosenfeld, 1973; Brophy and Good, 1974; and Pugh, 1974 for similar results from the United States). One additional finding of Gillett's research was that female teachers' perceptions of students' characteristics appeared to be related more to sex than ethnicity.

In addition, Sealey (1980) has studied the attitudes of a sample of 350 trainee teachers to different immigrant groups. On the whole these attitudes were fairly positive, although there appeared to be somewhat greater acceptance of the Greek and Italian students compared with the Turks and Yugoslavs. However, the teachers did have stereotyped views of different immigrant groups which differed markedly from the views they held of Australian students. Older trainees, particularly females, had the most positive attitudes towards the immigrant groups and young male trainee teachers the most negative.

Isaacs (1981) has suggested that bias against immigrant students may be evident in areas other than teacher behaviour. In a study involving just under 100 Greek students in Sydney, she argued that some of the reasons for the poor rate of participation in tertiary education by Greeks in Sydney were the self-perpetuating, inbuilt discriminating factors in texts and test materials. The study involved students aged between 9 and 10 years and students aged between 13 and 14 years. The study also revealed evidence of teacher disregard of the students' presence in class, belittling their attempts at argument, and downgrading their performance. On the other hand, Isaacs argued that hostility and lack of assistance at school did not affect the students' motivation or application to study, nor their faith in their ability to attain their goals.

Classroom Interaction

Another issue of potential importance concerning educational disadvantage is classroom interaction. Dunkin and Doenau (1982) investigated student ethnicity and classroom interaction in nine inner-suburban Year 6 classes in Sydney, with comparisons being made between 43 'Anglo' students and 43 'non-Anglo' students matched on general ability within sex groups. Anglo students were defined as those students who considered their family to have an identity associated with a country in which English was the dominant language. The general ability test used was the ACER *Test of Learning Ability 6*. As this is a verbal test, it may have resulted in some bias against the non-Anglo students.

The four 'sex by ethnicity' groups were compared on anxiety, interactions with teachers during social studies lessons, and performance on tests developed to measure knowledge and critical thinking on lesson content. While significant effects of ethnicity and sex upon anxiety were found between the total samples of Anglo and non-Anglo students, only that for sex was found in the matched samples. The non-Anglo females were involved generally in less than 50 per cent of the number of interactions expected on the basis of their numbers in the classes. There were no significant effects, however, of ethnicity or sex upon either knowledge or critical thinking achievement. Although it was admitted that a single lesson in only nine classes in four schools was an inadequate basis for firm conclusions, Dunkin and Doenau considered that their most provocative result concerned the behaviour and treatment of the non-Anglo girls during lessons which, they suggested, could not be entirely attributed to their high anxiety scores. The non-Anglo girls received fewer questions from the teacher, especially questions involving mathematical and calculational processes, and they initiated less interaction themselves. One possible explanation for this is that teachers had lower expectations of that group. An alternative hypothesis postulated by the authors was that the non-Anglo girls were determining their levels of participation, perhaps by adhering to sex roles acquired through their cultures.

Other studies, conducted in the United States, support the view that different treatments are accorded to ethnic groups in schools. It would seem that ethnic minority groups receive fewer teachers' questions and reactions (Rubovits and Maehr, 1973; Jackson and Cosca, 1974), and these reactions were less likely to be positive acceptance, encouragement, or praise (Tyo, 1972; Rubovits and Maehr, 1973; Gay, 1974; Jackson and Cosca, 1974; Mangold, 1974; Mathis, 1975; Hillman and Davenport, 1978). However, ethnic minority students were also less likely to receive negative reactions such as criticism (Tyo, 1972; Rubovits and Maehr, 1973; Mangold, 1974; Hillman and Davenport, 1978). Minority group students have also been shown to initiate less (Katz, 1973; Hillman and Davenport, 1978) and their general participation rate was found to be relatively low (Gay, 1974; Jackson and Cosca, 1974; Mathis, 1975).

Some caution is needed in attempting to extrapolate these findings to the Australian experience, given the societal differences between the United States and Australia and the different ethnic mix of the two countries.

School Policies

Although one would expect that many schools throughout Australia would have developed policies directly concerned with the ethnic mix of their school (either in response to state and federal initiatives, or as a result of their own or their school community's initiatives), there is little documentation of these activities and their effects. An exception is the review of bilingual education and Australian schools conducted by Mills (1982). Mills noted the development of ethnic schools for certain immigrant groups and also documented some of the practices occurring within the state government and Catholic schools to encourage community language education.

Mills noted that any systematic evaluation of these programs was lacking in Australia. The picture that emerged in his review was one of enthusiasm on the part of numbers of teachers and administrators, appreciation and involvement on the part of many parents, and enjoyment on the part of many students. Among the acknowledged difficulties were the shortage of bilingual teachers, lack of resources, and uncertainties about objectives. In fact, Mills argued that such questioning raised serious doubts in the long term about the viability of the community language teaching movement.

An exception to the lack of research and evaluation of school policies is the study conducted by Moore and Rosenthal (1982) which indicated that students within schools which attempted to provide policies suitable for their ethnic composition tended to view favourably the school's attempt. This favourable view was especially noticeable among the older students. On the other hand, non-Anglo Australians were less satisfied than Anglo Australians with the schools' ethnic policies whatever the measured orientation index of the school (an index to gauge the degree to which schools respond to their ethnic composition). Those students in high 'ethnic orientation' schools tended to score higher on 'industry' and 'emotional tone' regardless of their ethnic background and, although the non-Anglo Australians benefited most, there was no disadvantage for Anglo Australians either. Greek males and Italian females seemed unaffected by the schools' orientation and the authors hypothesized that the strong support system for Greeks in the home overpowered other possible effects, while the levels of adjustment of the Italian females were so low that they could not be affected by the school.

Schools and the Social Structure

The introduction to this review noted that increasing attention was being paid to the place of schools in social structures and how this might affect the production of inequalities. Research on this issue, however, is sparse. An exception is the study by Connell et al. (1982) which provides one of the few Australian attempts to initiate research on reproduction theories. The research focused on two specific groups of families whose social position, relationship to each other, and relationship to the school might assist in understanding what actually happened to students in schools. The groups were the families of people doing manual or semi-manual work on the one hand, and managers, businessmen, and professionals on the other. The methodology involved interviews with students, their parents, teachers, and school principals.

The findings of this study indicated that the patterns of relationships (that is, expectations and interactions) of 'ruling-class' parents and schools differed from that of the relationships of 'working-class' parents and schools. As a result, the existing social structure tended to be reinforced by the schools. The authors argued that ruling-class parents saw teachers and schools as facilities to serve their interests and their educational backgrounds gave them the confidence to become involved in educational decision making. Working-class parents, because of their often alienating educational experiences, lacked confidence and saw the educational system as a complex bureaucracy. There was however, little in the study that could be directly related to the experiences of immigrant students and their families.

Summary

This chapter has reviewed a number of studies that have attempted to relate how schooling processes, curriculum content, and the social role of schools themselves might affect immigrant Australians and contribute towards social class inequalities. Evidence concerning more direct effects of the schooling experience, such as the effects of teacher attitudes to immigrant students or the quality of the classroom interactions that they have, provided tentative support for the proposition that such students may have different school experiences from those of their Australian peers. For example, there was evidence that ethnicity was related to the nature of the school and classroom interaction processes, but it was unclear whether this had further long-term effects and it was not clear how this evolved. There was also evidence that teachers' expectations of students, and their perceptions about them, were in some way related to the ethnicity of the students. The dearth of information and research in this area makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions.

6 : IMMIGRANT GROUPS AND SCHOOL OUTCOMES

The concept of disadvantage is multi-faceted. The previous two chapters have discussed some of these aspects, such as access to opportunities in the context of compulsory schooling, attitudes towards educational experiences, and the aspirations that students or their families bring to the schooling process. Educational outcomes are a further important component of disadvantage, both because outcomes affect later opportunities and because they represent criteria by which disadvantage can be judged.

This chapter focuses on educational outcomes within the levels of primary and secondary schooling. Two aspects of outcomes, namely, retention rates and educational achievement are considered.

Retention Rates

Few Australian studies have attempted to estimate the importance of different factors, including ethnicity, in determining retention rates. An exception is the ACER *Youth in Transition* project which has involved longitudinal studies of students over the period from the late 1970s to the present. In 1978 work commenced on tracing samples of students who, at the ages of 10 and 14 years, had participated in the 1975 ACER Literacy and Numeracy Study (Bourke and Keeves, 1977). The first report to emerge from this study (Williams, Clancy, Batten, and Girling-Butcher, 1980) was based on the responses of just under 5000 young people, most of whom were still at school. Several pertinent measures of ethnicity were available from the 1975 study. However, because individual immigrant groups were not specially sampled in the *Youth in Transition* study (89 per cent of students, for example, were born in Australia), the authors chose to represent the migrancy and language components of ethnicity in a single indicator based on the father's country of birth. The categories were: Australian-born (72 per cent), born in English-speaking nations other than Australia (13 per cent), and born in non-English-speaking nations (15 per cent). The authors argued that although the categories were coarse they seemed to capture those members of immigrant groups most at risk—that is, those with the least exposure to acculturating influences and those with the greatest degree of language disadvantage. On the other hand, the inability of the study to disaggregate data by national background is a severe limitation with respect to interpreting findings related to ethnicity.

The study found that, with respect to the completion of secondary school, having a father born in a non-English-speaking country appeared to be an advantage. This finding is consistent with the studies cited earlier on the educational aspirations of immigrant groups.

Rosier (1978) has provided additional evidence concerning retentivity and ethnicity in a study of the determinants of the decisions of 16-year-old Australian youth to remain at school or to leave. Rosier sampled students in 1970 when the students were aged 14, and two years later when they were aged 16. Underlying the study was a conceptual framework based on the assumption that a young person's decision to remain at school or to leave was influenced both by a range of environmental factors and by a set of personal characteristics. Of particular interest to this review were the effects on the school leaving decision of the extent to which English was the spoken home language. The analysis examined the contribution of language to the model over and above that explained by other basic family environment variables and by sex. Rosier concluded that home language made only a marginal contribution to the decision to leave school, although there was a tendency for those students whose home language was not English to remain at school longer, and this association became stronger once the basic family environment variables and sex had been controlled.

The relatively greater likelihood of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds (especially from families of lower occupational status) completing secondary school has been confirmed in a number of other studies (Tinney et al., 1974; Connell et al., 1975; Taft, 1975b; Wright et al., 1978) and more recently, by the studies of retention rates in government schools in Victoria (Ainley et al., 1984a) and across Australia (Ainley et al., 1984b).

On the other hand, Connell et al. (1975) have warned of the difficulty of generalizing across all immigrant groups. Although they found that second-generation Australian immigrants tended to stay on at school longer than their Australian peers in the lower socioeconomic categories, young people from Italian, Yugoslavian, and Greek backgrounds were less likely to complete secondary school than were Australian students, irrespective of their desires. The authors noted that these were predominantly lower class ethnic groups. Martin and Meade (1979) have also shown that there was more variation in retention and performance at school from one non-English-speaking ethnic group to the next than between all students of non-English-speaking origin and all children of Australian or other English-speaking origin. In common with the other studies cited, retention rates were found to be higher for immigrant Australians of non-English-speaking origin but, for example, Greeks on average stayed longer at school than Maltese, and a greater proportion of 'new arrivals' tended to leave school relatively early.

An important aspect of the relationship between ethnicity and retention has been highlighted by Burke and Davis (1984). They noted that, while research has shown the higher retention patterns of ethnic groups, it is also true that Catholic schools, which have a higher retention rate than government schools, enrol a disproportionately larger number of ethnic students. It may be that school type in some manner contributes towards retention or that the ethnic composition of the Catholic schools affects the retention patterns in those schools.

Sex Differences in Retention Rates

The need to distinguish female from male immigrant Australians in their aspirations and attainments has been highlighted in the Schools Commission report *Girls, School and Society*:

> The generally higher aspirations of non-English-speaking migrant families do not extend as strongly to females as to males, and there are some indications that Italian girls fall considerably below other groups including Australians, in their aspirations. There is no evidence that the daughters of migrant parents perform any less well than the sons, but at both 16 and 18 year-old levels in 1971, girls born in Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia were markedly more likely to have left the education system than were Australian girls or boys of similar background. (Australia. Schools Commission, 1975b:140)

Support for this conclusion is provided by Williams and Clancy (1985). In reporting findings from the ACER *Youth in Transition* study, they documented that once a number of factors had been controlled (family background, school characteristics, achievement, and psychological support), there were no differences in retention rates between females belonging to the three categories of ethnicity used in the study, but males from ethnic groups had higher retention rates. Similarly, Poole (1985) has argued that the interaction of social class, ethnicity, and gender not only influences individual achievement (including retention) but also sets limits for future pathways and options.

Ability and Retention

A number of studies have examined the effect of ability on retention rates for different immigrant groups although this area is fraught with difficulties because of possible cultural and language biases in the tests conventionally used to measure 'ability'. For example, Connell et al. (1975) used mean IQ scores based upon the *Otis Higher Test B* and another unspecified test in an attempt to measure ability wastage, but they have warned that the scores were not entirely independent of social class which was shown to correlate with IQ, and they also warned that the IQ scores would be affected by cultural differences, particularly language, such that the means of immigrant Australians were undoubtedly underestimated. Not surprisingly, there was a strong correlation between the IQ measures and the amount of English spoken in the home within the immigrant Australian sample. When IQ means were compared across four age groups the predictable increase in mean IQ which occurred after Year 9 for the Australian subsample was much less marked for the immigrant student subsample; for some, in fact, a decrease occurred. The authors suggested therefore that many more immigrant Australians of above average ability left school at age 15 than was the case with Australians, and the groups which were most severely affected were Asians, Poles, and Yugoslavs. It should be noted, however, that one problem in comparing IQ scores of different student groups by age level is that it is possible that immigrant Australians might on average be older than Australian students at each year level (cf. Gallagher and Margitta, 1970; Wiseman, 1971; Isaacs, 1981).

Blandy and Goldsworthy (1975) have also analysed the effects of ability and ethnicity on the decision to leave school early. Their study involved four separate surveys of South Australian students in the last three years of secondary school: the first was conducted in 1970 on a sample of 2000 students with a follow-up survey a year later, and a further survey was conducted in 1971 on a sample of approximately 4500 students with a follow-up in 1972. The second major survey was conducted to overcome weaknesses in the first survey resulting from the small sample size. The authors chose as their definition of migrancy the place of birth of the student as they argued that this would be most likely to show the sharpest differences between immigrant and other students. The effect of this, however, is to exclude many students who would in other studies have been defined as belonging to ethnic groups and in fact over half of the immigrant Australians in this study came from English-speaking backgrounds.

Blandy and Goldsworthy argued that language difficulties contributed in no small way to the low IQ scores that some children whose mother tongue was not English received. (The IQ measures used in the study were based on school records.) Nevertheless, only in Year 11 did the immigrant Australian group average IQ fall below the Australian average and it was thought that this was caused by the greater proportion of immigrant Australians with language difficulties remaining to that level. Although, not surprisingly, low IQ students tended to leave school earlier than high IQ students, the authors suggested that academic motivation could partly substitute for IQ as the low IQ 'survivors' were strongly motivated to achieve. Blandy and Goldsworthy reported that if anything immigrant children and their parents were more strongly achievement motivated than their Australian counterparts.

In a more recent study, Martin and Meade (1979) found that for immigrant Australians of non-English-speaking origins educational aspirations were a more important influence on retention than socioeconomic status, IQ (based on a verbal test), or school performance. In a later report of this study, Meade (1983) revealed, however, that IQ had a powerful influence on aspirations. Teachers were more likely to encourage students with higher IQs, and students with higher IQs studied more at home and watched less television. The study also revealed that retentivity to the final year of school was positively related to both IQ and socioeconomic status. However, in common with other studies it was found that more immigrant students with lower IQ and lower socioeconomic status stayed at school than their Australian counterparts.

School Achievement

Primary School Studies

In the second report from the ACER *Youth in Transition* study, Williams et al. (1981) concluded that, after controlling for other factors such as socioeconomic status, having a father born outside of Australia operated as a mild disadvantage for students as far as mastering literacy and numeracy in the primary school was concerned. Although some language disadvantage was hypothesized from the examination of achievement in word knowledge, the authors noted:

> Seeing that the differences that do occur are of about the same size in each migrant group, the achievement disadvantage shown is not attributable to problems with language but, rather, has something to do with being a migrant. (Williams et al., 1981:58)

However, the effects were fairly small and the authors concluded that in general ethnic origin seemed not to have much of an effect on achievement in the primary school. It may be, however, that the effects would not be so small for certain immigrant groups but the ACER study could not examine this.

De Lemos (1975) also investigated the performance of students from different ethnic origins at the primary school level. This study was based on samples of about 250 students in each of Years 2, 4, and 6 drawn from 240 Melbourne primary schools. For the purpose of analysis, a distinction was made between Australians (one or both parents born in Australia, at least one of an English-speaking background and English given as the main home language), English-speaking immigrants (both parents born outside of Australia and English given as the main home language), and non-English-speaking immigrants (both parents born in a non-English-speaking country and a language other than English given as the main home language).

De Lemos found marked and consistent differences between children from English-speaking and non-English-speaking backgrounds on various measures of achievement and conceptual functioning. The differences were more marked on the verbal tests, with those from the non-English-speaking background performing at a lower level in each year level. However, the differences between the groups on the non-verbal and arithmetic tests decreased from Year 2 to Year 6, and were no longer statistically significant at Year 6. Similarly, there were no significant differences on the non-verbal general ability test (Raven's Progressive Matrices) between Australian children and children of non-English origin who had lived in Australia for over five years. De Lemos also commented that, within the group with non-English-speaking origins, national background is confounded with socioeconomic status: the higher status category included more children from a northern European background and the lower status category included more children from a southern European background.

Perhaps the most sophisticated study into the relationship between family environment and the educational achievements of immigrant Australian students was conducted by Marjoribanks (1980:50–60). The data enabled comparison of the performance of several major ethnic and social groups on a number of different achievement measures. Achievement patterns were studied at the end of the period of primary schooling and a number of major findings were reported:

1 For mathematics, the Anglo-Australian middle social-status mean score was higher than those of the Southern Italian and Greek children, while the Anglo-Australian lower social-status mean performance was higher than that for Southern Italian children.

2 The Anglo-Australian middle social-status mean word knowledge score

was higher than the means of other groups, except for the English children. The Anglo-Australian lower social-status and the English group mean word knowledge scores were higher than those of the Southern Italian and Greek children while the Yugoslavian value was higher than that of the Greek children.

3. For word comprehension, the Anglo-Australian middle social-status mean score was higher than the performances of other groups except the English children, while the Anglo-Australian lower social-status mean scores were higher than those of Greek and Southern Italian children.
4. Children from different eth-classes did not differ significantly on measures of commitment to school.

There was evidence therefore that, at least for the eth-classes examined in this study, the Italian, Greek, and Yugoslavian students achieved at a lower level than did Australians of similar socioeconomic background. Marjoribanks also found that eth-class had stronger associations with the cognitive scores of girls than boys. It would seem that families from different eth-classes created different learning environments for their children, and different ones for males and females, and those environments in turn affected children's academic performance.

Of interest in the study by Marjoribanks was the influence on achievement of the importance attached to English in the family and of other family value orientations. Although changes in the measures of 'press for English' at each level of parents' aspirations had no relationship to achievement for Anglo-Australian middle social-status children, for Greek children, however, it appeared that low press for English obscured potential associations between parents' aspirations and children's performance. For both Greek and Anglo-Australian lower social-status children, very high parental aspirations (when associated with low press for English scores) were related to low academic performance. Only when the press for English scores were high did the Greek performance begin to approach that of the middle social-status Anglo-Australians. It was found, also, that changes in value orientations from 'collectivistic' to 'individualistic' were related to increments in comprehension scores for Southern Italian and Anglo-Australian lower status children (but not for Greek children).

The study also found that, at each level of children's intelligence, increases in the affective component of school attitudes (commitment to school) were not associated with variations in academic achievement. However, relations between academic achievement, intelligence and the cognitive–behavioural component of school attitudes (academic adjustment to school) varied widely for children from different eth-classes. For example, the relatively low academic performance of children from certain low social-status eth-class groups was reflected in their difficulties in adjusting to the school environment.

Marjoribanks (1982) used the data from the 1980 study in an attempt to replicate a series of cross-cultural investigations conducted in the United States. These studies had indicated that children from different immigrant groups were characterized by distinct profiles in cognitive scores and that such profiles remained invariant across different social-status levels. Marjoribanks found, however, only modest support for the proposition that a relationship between children's patterns of academic achievement and the distinctiveness of their learning contexts exists. The findings indicated that although the social groups from within Anglo-Australian, Greek, and Southern Italian samples were characterized by relatively distinct profiles of learning environment dimensions, which had moderate associations with achievement measures, the groups were *not* defined by distinct patterns of children's academic achievement. An important consequence of the Marjoribanks studies was that the use of the eth-class concept produced different patterns of results than would be likely to occur if ethnic groups in total were compared. This points out the need for a more fine-grained approach to the study of ethnicity than has been characteristic of most Australian research on the area.

Secondary School Studies

Research has shown consistently that secondary school students from certain non-English-speaking backgrounds, despite relatively high levels of retentivity, perform less well than other students (cf. Connell et al., 1975; Taft, 1975a; 1975b; Boyd, 1976; Hewitt, 1977; 1978; Turney et al., 1978; Wright et al., 1978; Williams et al., 1980; Isaacs, 1981; Dapiran, 1982; Meade, 1983). Research also has suggested that students with non-English-speaking backgrounds were more likely to repeat grades at school (Gallagher and Margitta, 1970; Wiseman, 1971; Isaacs, 1981).

A major factor affecting achievement emerging from these studies is the language proficiency of students. The importance of this factor in influencing secondary school performance was underlined by Williams et al. (1980:62):

> Other things equal, being born outside Australia in an English-speaking nation makes no discernible difference to one's achievements in school: thus neither accent nor migrancy appears to matter for migrants whose chosen

> mother-tongue is English. Where this mother-tongue is not English, one or both, or a variety of concomitants, do matter. Compared with other students alike in the respects measured here, non-English-born students are disadvantaged in these achievements scoring, on the average, 1.83 points lower on Word Knowledge, 1.09 points lower on Literacy and, where language is less important, 0.71 points lower on Numeracy.

The authors argued that, because the pattern of achievement paralleled the verbal requirements for the tests and the English-born immigrant group was not disadvantaged significantly, the ethnicity effect could be attributed to language disadvantage.

The importance of language problems for the mastery of literacy and numeracy was also indicated in the work conducted by Hewitt (1977, 1978). These studies involved both secondary and primary school children. The 1977 study formed part of the ACER *Australian Studies in School Performance* (Bourke and Keeves, 1977) and involved almost 1000 10-year-old and 700 14-year-old immigrant students who were compared with over 6000 Australian students of each age group. For the purpose of the study an immigrant Australian was defined as a student who came from a family unit where at least one parent was born outside Australia and where no English, or a language in addition to English, was spoken in the home. Hewitt reported that 59 per cent of 10-year-old and 43 per cent of 14-year-old immigrant Australians (compared with 47 per cent and 28 per cent of Australian students respectively) failed to reach the 80 per cent mastery level on the Reading Tests. The most important influence appeared to be the amount of English spoken in the home. While lack of English affected reading mastery, some immigrant Australians were more disadvantaged than others. Students whose parents were born overseas in countries other than northern Europe were less likely to perform well in reading, and students who themselves were born outside of Australia, irrespective of their parents' country of birth, also appeared disadvantaged. With respect to numeracy, immigrant Australians' performance was more encouraging. Only 32 per cent of 10-year-old and 34 per cent of 14-year-old immigrant students failed to reach the 80 per cent mastery level of the numeration test, and this was much closer to the figures for Australia overall than was the performance in reading. It is worth noting that Hewitt also found small groups of immigrant students who performed well above the overall Australian levels.

A subsample of the students included in this ACER study formed the basis of further analysis by Hewitt (1978) of the factors relating to the performance of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The immigrant Australians experiencing difficulties were found not to be restricted only to those born overseas. The major factor affecting the level of performance seemed to be environmental press for English, which for 10-year-olds was centred in the home while for 14-year-olds was focused on the student's peer group. Other relevant influences were the national origin of the family and the birthplace of the student (those from southern Europe seemed most disadvantaged and those from northern Europe most advantaged). Length of residence in Australia, however, was found not to be an important determinant of level of performance. This study appeared to confirm the importance that press for English within the family has on achievement at the upper primary school level (see Marjoribanks, 1980). For secondary school students, however, it seemed that the peer group environment became more important.

Similar findings were reported by Dapiran (1982) who compared school achievement of Western Europeans (Dutch and German), Southern Europeans (Italians and Greeks), and Anglo-Australians. The data were based on the 1970 IEA Science Study and were collected from students who were aged 14 in 1970 and who had remained at school until 1972. Home environment variables were analysed as potential determinants of achievement in word knowledge and science for the sample of approximately 350 immigrant Australians; the parents' country of birth was used as the measure of ethnicity. It was found that the Southern Europeans performed less well than the other groups, and for all groups, the importance of parental education and literacy in the home was clearly evident.

Newly Arrived Immigrants

Given that they are more likely to suffer language problems, newly arrived immigrants to Australia are of special interest in an examination of educational disadvantage. Spearitt and Colman (1983) evaluated the Commonwealth Contingency Program for newly arrived Indo-Chinese refugees. The program was intended to assist children's language acquisition and funds were used for specialist language teachers, teacher aides, materials, and equipment. As the program developed, money was made available for a six-month period of assistance for eligible children. Data were collected in Sydney and Melbourne on 400 students aged between 9 and 15. The refugees had arrived in Australia from Laos, Vietnam, and Kampuchea. However, as refugees are a unique group, some caution should be used in extrapolating these findings to other newly arrived immigrant Australians. At the primary school level the Vietnamese performed better than the other refugees on a numbers skills test taken after 14 weeks in Australia. It was argued that this was related to the particularly adverse circumstances that the other refugees had experienced with respect to previous schooling. At the secondary school level, however, this difference between the groups had disappeared. Also, at the primary school level the performances in 'addition' and 'subtraction' of the Vietnamese were not significantly different to those of Victorian children (the test had been normed in Victoria), but they were below the Victorian norms in 'multiplication' and 'division'. The Laotian and Kampuchean students were below the Victorian norms on all aspects of the test.

After six months in the Contingency Program, it was found that at both primary and secondary level the percentages of refugees answering items correctly in a reading test were significantly lower than the average percentages of Australian students at both age levels and significantly lower than a subgroup of the Australian sample who came from homes where little or no English was spoken. Similar results were reported for numeration tests.

Spearitt and Colman also investigated the performance of the same children when they had moved into the normal education system. At the time of testing they would have been enrolled in state schools for between 3 and 8 months. With respect to oral proficiency and essay writing, the improvements achieved through the program were not sufficient to compensate for earlier disadvantages and the students were below the standard of Australians of comparable ages. Similar findings applied to literacy and numeracy tests. There was also evidence that some students, once moved into the educational system, became more withdrawn, although overall their level of adjustment and acceptance was seen as satisfactory.

Other Factors and their Effects on Achievement

Several studies have examined the effects of ability, cognitive style, family academic orientation, and student adjustment to school on the achievement of immigrant Australians. In connection with the effect of ability on achievement, Marjoribanks (1980) used the ***Raven's Progressive Matrices*** as a measure to assess intellectual ability because, he argued, it appeared to have a greater degree of cultural neutrality than most other measures. His study indicated that for Southern Italian children, at each attitude level (commitment to school), the largest increases in comprehension scores were related to differences in intelligence (as measured by the Raven's test) within the lower ability range of scores. The study also revealed a positive association between intelligence and mathematics achievement at each level of academic adjustment to school. With respect to word knowledge, for the Anglo-Australian lower social-status children increments in attitude scores (adjustment to school) were associated with achievement only at high intelligence levels.

In analysing the relationship between 'press for English', intelligence and word knowledge, Marjoribanks found that for the Anglo-Australian lower social-status children the word knowledge scores had positive associations with both intelligence and the importance attached to English. For Greek children, however, although intelligence was found to be an important predictor of achievement, press for English was not found to have a direct effect. For Southern Italian children, the relationship was somewhat more complex, in that at each level of intelligence increments in press for English scores were associated with increments in word knowledge performance.

In another study which examined the intellectual abilities of students from different national backgrounds, Meade (1983) found that students with both parents born overseas in non-English-speaking countries on average achieved lower scores on the *ACER ML and MQ* tests than other students. However, as might have been expected, when non-verbal ability and aptitude tests were used, there was a narrowing in average performance between groups, which suggested that bias occurred when verbal tests were used.

Poole (1981b) has reviewed research concerned with the relationship between cognitive style and the academic achievement of immigrant Australians. She noted that, although different cognitive strategies employed by different groups have been revealed, the variables which influence that style (its development and patterning) are only just beginning to be considered and, as a consequence, the relationship of such dimensions to school achievement and orientation remain to be investigated at a psychosocial level. Generally, Poole noted that little research had been undertaken in Australia on the cognitive style of immigrant groups and most published studies focused on individual aspects of cognitive processing rather than on self-consistent and enduring differences in cognitive organization and functioning.

One exception to this is the study by Gauci (1983) which examined the relationship between cognitive style and academic achievement of students of Maltese background compared with 'Anglo-Celtic' students, that is, students born in Australia and whose parents and grandparents were born in Australia. This study suggested that overall there were no differences between the Maltese and Anglo-Celtic students with respect to their capacity to switch from one cognitive style to another. However, it was argued that Maltese females were more likely to be locked into particular cognitive styles than males (that is, they were more field dependent). On the whole, cognitive style did not contribute greatly to the variance in academic scores. Among the Anglo-Celtic and Maltese male groups, ability was found to be the key predictor of performance. Both the *Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices* and the *ACER Higher Test* (non-verbal and verbal) were used to assess ability. Despite the likelihood that the former of these two tests would be more suitable for the Maltese students, analyses were based upon an average score on the two tests. The study also revealed that field independent students had a higher level of academic achievement. Intellectual ability was an important factor in academic achievement for field independent students for all measures of performance; for field dependent students sex, ethnicity, and intellectual ability were all found to be important.

The final factors discussed in this section are the effects on achievement of family academic orientations and student adjustment to school. Marjoribanks (1980) found that academic adjustment to school did have positive associations with mathematics achievement at different levels of intelligence and, for the English and the middle social-status Australian group, increases in adjustment scores led to increases in achievement in word knowledge. In analysing the relationship between a family academic orientation scale, student adjustment to school and mathematics performance, findings were mixed. For Southern Italian children the family orientations and student attitude scores had significant effects on achievement, while for the English and Anglo-Australian lower social-status children, attitude values were not related to achievement at different environment levels.

Summary

The general pattern is for students with non-English-speaking backgrounds to remain longer at school than other students, although variations across the different immigrant groups are evident. This pattern extended across all social classes and one of the more interesting findings was that immigrant students of lower socioeconomic status had relatively high aspirations and, at least with respect to school participation, seemed more able to achieve these aspirations than was the case for Australians or immigrant students from English-speaking backgrounds. However, there was some evidence that despite high retention patterns for immigrant Australians there was still some ability wastage, and that the high levels of retentivity were not as evident for female immigrant students.

The results of research concerning school achievement are less easy to summarize. There is no doubt that some immigrant groups suffer disadvantage in performance at both the primary and secondary level (especially at the primary school level), although this disadvantage is far less evident for numeracy than for other areas. Given the generally lower performance of ethnic students on literacy measures, it is reasonable to argue that there is a large language-related component to disadvantage, particularly for newly-arrived immigrants and certain ethnic subgroups. However it is worth noting that, with the younger sample in the ACER longitudinal studies, there was found to be a small migrancy effect operating over and above the language effect in accounting for the lower academic performance of immigrant students.

7 : IMMIGRANT GROUPS AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine immigrant groups' experiences at the tertiary level. Tertiary education includes universities, colleges of advanced education, and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutions. The chapter is organized in the same way as were the chapters focusing on schooling, that is, there are separate discussions of how immigrant Australians approach tertiary education, how tertiary institutions respond to immigrant groups, and how well immigrant Australians perform at tertiary level.

Immigrant Groups and their Approach to Tertiary Education

The aspirations of immigrant Australians towards tertiary education have been discussed in Chapter 4. This research indicated that students from non-English-speaking backgrounds generally had higher educational aspirations than Australians or immigrant Australians from English-speaking countries. This pattern prevailed when both university and college education were considered and it was notable that the high aspirations of ethnic groups extended to those students belonging to the lower socioeconomic groups, whereas for other students aspirational levels correlated highly with the occupational status of their parents.

The research also revealed that amongst the immigrant groups there were varying aspirations towards types of tertiary opportunities. For example, there was an indication that those from northern and western Europe were less likely to aspire towards university, those from eastern European countries other than Poland and those from Greece seemed to prefer a college education rather than a university education, whereas those from Asia and Italy were more likely to aspire to university. However, it is not possible to determine whether these aspirations reflected aspects of access to institutions, choices made within the limits of students' academic expectations, or other factors, perhaps related to course availability. It should also be cautioned that much of the research reviewed into tertiary aspirations occurred in the early seventies and it is not clear whether these patterns would still prevail.

Students' Knowledge of Opportunities

Although there has been little research in this area, there is some evidence that immigrant Australians from non-English-speaking countries have access to a limited range of advice compared with other students. The isolation of parents of ethnic students from the school and possible family language difficulties were both seen to hamper the availability of advice for students (cf. Meade, 1983; Young, Cox, and Daly, 1983). Just how this may affect immigrant students' transition to tertiary education is not clear.

Tertiary Education and its Response to Immigrant Groups

In discussing research on the response of schools to immigrant students in Chapter 5, the small number of relevant studies was noted. If anything, material on the response of the tertiary sector is even more limited. Indeed, there are probably only two broad areas on which anything much at all can be usefully said: the availability of tertiary opportunities and financial aspects of tertiary participation. Strictly speaking of course, even these two areas relate more to general policies for the tertiary sector as a whole than to specific responses to immigrant students.

Availability of Tertiary Education Opportunities

At a general level, Karmel (1983) has noted that the participation of young people in Australian higher education fell sharply between 1974 and 1981. He argued that this reduction was not related to greater difficulties in gaining admission to tertiary institutions, rather that the contrary had happened. Although minimum entry standards had been maintained, for most courses in most institutions admission had become easier rather than harder to gain. Karmel implied from this that significant numbers who in previous years might have been expected to seek places in universities and colleges were no longer doing so.

Whether these general trends have any particular significance for immigrant groups is difficult to discern since there have been few studies which have focused specifically on immigrant students in tertiary education. A notable exception is the recent paper prepared by Burke and Davis (1984) for the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs. They argued that the trend identified by Karmel has been reversed in recent times and that the demand for tertiary places over the rest of the 1980s is likely to exceed the supply. As a result those students with marginal matriculation qualifications may have difficulty in proceeding to post-secondary education. They suggested that this may be of particular consequence for students from non-English-speaking backgrounds because of evidence (some of which is discussed in Chapter 6) that the educational aspirations of some ethnic students do not match their academic performance.

Burke and Davis also noted that the Commonwealth Government has directed that any growth in higher education should be channelled towards management, science, and technology. As a possible counter balance to the point enunciated above, they argued that this particular policy directive was unlikely to disadvantage immigrant students from non-English-speaking backgrounds, presumably because certain groups of European students tend to be well represented in engineering and science faculties (Anderson, Boven, Fensham, and Powell, 1978), and ethnic students as a whole are less likely to enter teacher training, an area that was hit particularly hard in the cut-backs of the late 1970s.

Burke and Davis also examined the role of TAFE in the structure and philosophy of education for immigrant Australians. At the national level, they argued that mid-1982 marked a radical change in educational provisions for adult immigrants as a result of the transfer of the funding and provision of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses from the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs to TAFE. Funds have been provided not only to increase course provision but also to improve curriculum and staff development.

Burke and Davis have commented that some TAFE departments have responded extensively and quickly to these new demands but others have not, and that the change in organization has produced some negative effects. For example, some innovative courses previously taking place in higher education institutions have lost their funding. In addition, some TAFE authorities have expressed concern about priorities being imposed upon them which may have led to a diversion of funds, difficulties in determining the extent of demand for courses and client expectations, shortage in staff and teaching materials, and problems in financial allowances for course applicants.

Despite these problems, Burke and Davis argued that there is some attempt at national and state level to advance the education of immigrant Australians not only through English-language programs, but also through broad multicultural policies. The authors cited policy initiatives in New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia as evidence of these developments.

Financial Constraints upon Educational Participation

In a review of factors affecting participation by young people in tertiary education, Hayden (1982) argued that patterns of movement in the financial costs and benefits of a higher education qualification provide the most compelling, though not complete, explanation of why young people were turning away from higher education in the late seventies and early eighties. Among other factors which Hayden revealed as affecting post-secondary educational participation was parental encouragement. He argued that between the mid-1970s and the early eighties there seemed to have been an increased reluctance by parents to encourage their children to undertake higher education.

Notwithstanding the general merit of these arguments, they may need some modification with regard to immigrant Australians. Elsworth, Day, Hurworth, and Andrews (1982) have shown that, in Victoria at least, immigrant Australian students were more likely to take up an offer of higher education, they were comparatively more likely to come from lower socioeconomic groups, and their decision to take educational places seemed as much related to parental encouragement as to anything else. Furthermore, in a study of tertiary student finances (Beswick, Hayden, and Schofield, 1983) problems of finance were less likely to be mentioned by ethnic groups as a barrier to tertiary participation than by others. Parental income for the ethnic groups was not a predictor of transition to tertiary education and had only a marginal effect on attrition rates.

Although the perceived low level of importance of finance for the ethnic groups may have been related to the fact that they were more likely to be in receipt of a TEAS allowance (see Beswick et al., 1983), it is unlikely that this is a completely satisfactory answer. More likely, the ethnic students are still perceiving higher education to be extremely valuable and this is reinforced by the positive attitudes of their parents who may have a strong willingness to undergo possible economic hardship to assist their children in education. This analysis is speculative, and clearly further research is required.

Participation Rates in Tertiary Education

Higher Education

Burke and Davis (1984) have shown that, although on average 15 to 24-year-olds from ethnic groups were more likely to have completed a degree than were other students, there were certain ethnic subgroups (particularly Yugoslavs, Lebanese, Turks, Vietnamese, and Italian females) in which graduates were under-represented. In addition, much of the research reviewed by Anderson and Vervoorn (1983) indicated that up to the mid-1970s, at least, the tertiary participation rates of ethnic students were not as high as the aspirations that they expressed in secondary school would have suggested (cf. Anderson and Western, 1970; Mitchell, 1976). Further, studies from the 1960s and early 1970s suggested that ethnic groups were more likely to study in colleges than universities and it was speculated that, given the high aspirations of ethnic students, many may have been forced to settle for a college place because their matriculation results had not been high enough to win a university place (cf. Fensham and Taft, 1973).

Precise details of the national backgrounds of students have been available since 1970 for the University of Melbourne. Anderson and Vervoorn (1983) have compared these figures with estimates made by Price and Pyne (1976) of the size of various age groups of children of immigrant origin in the Victorian population in 1976. The criterion of national background used was, unlike most other research, the mother's country of birth. Price and Pyne argued that it is the culture and language of the mother rather than of the father which on the whole determine the cultural and linguistic habits of the family. It was found that between 1970 and 1978 the percentage of students with Australian-born mothers decreased by 7 per cent, which suggests that the massive immigration of the 1950s was having an impact on universities. The ethnic groups that contributed most to increased participation were Asians, Italians, Greeks, and Yugoslavs. The participation of the Asians was considered to be related to increased immigration and not merely their presence as 'overseas students', and the increased participation of the three European groups was considered to be a response to the more recent migration patterns. Relative to the Victorian population (age group 15–19), the groups under-represented were: those from English-speaking backgrounds, including Australia, those from Holland, and those from Southern Europe. The groups significantly over-represented were from Germany, Eastern Europe, and Asia. However, since these figures relate to just one university (and a highly selective one at that), caution is needed in extrapolating the findings to other higher education institutions.

More recent data, predominantly concerned with second-generation immigrant Australians, provide a more complete picture on the tertiary sector as a whole. Table 7.1 presents recent unpublished data from the ACER longitudinal *Youth in Transition* study. The table compares the educational participation rates of students from three different categories

Table 7.1 Educational Participation of a Sample of Young People Classified by Father's Birthplace, 1978–1982[a]

	1978			1979			1980			1981			1982		
Respondent's age	17 years			18 years			19 years			20 years			21 years		
	Father's birthplace			Father's birthplace			Father's birthplace			Father's birthplace			Father's birthplace		
	A	E	NE	A	E	NE	A	E	NE	A	E	NE	A	E	NE
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Full-time study –															
Secondary school	30	31	47	9	9	17	1	1	1	–	1	–	–	–	–
University	1	1	1	6	7	8	7	6	13	6	8	12	5	4	9
College of advanced education	–	–	–	5	7	5	6	7	7	7	5	8	5	3	7
TAFE[b]	3	1	3	3	3	4	1	3	2	1	2	–	–	1	–
nec[c]	2	1	3	2	2	3	1	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
Part-time study –															
Full-time employment	12	14	7	22	23	13	26	26	20	20	21	23	16	20	17
Part-time employment	–	–	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	–
No employment	1	1	–	1	1	2	3	2	3	1	2	1	1	2	3
Not in education	52	51	39	51	48	47	55	52	51	65	60	55	70	70	63
Total numbers	2403	360	529	2392	361	535	2446	362	525	2169	303	475	1897	256	391

Source: Unpublished material from the ACER *Youth in Transition* study.

[a] A = Australian-born, E = born overseas in an English-speaking country, and NE = born overseas in a non-English-speaking country.

[b] TAFE = Technical and Further Education.

[c] nec—not elsewhere classified.

of ethnic background based upon the birthplace of the students' fathers. These three categories are: born in Australia, born in English-speaking countries other than Australia, and born in non-English-speaking countries. The strength of the study is that it is based upon a national representative sample and it provides very recent material. Its weakness, for the purposes of this review, is that the sample sizes do not enable separate consideration of the different national backgrounds within the broad categories. Respondents in this particular sample were aged 17 years in 1978, the first year for which data were available. Table 7.1 shows clearly that young people with non-English-speaking backgrounds were far more likely to be in full-time study than were those from other backgrounds, while there was little difference between the participation rates of those with fathers born in Australia and those with fathers born overseas in an English-speaking country. There was a greater tendency for students from non-English-speaking backgrounds to be enrolled full-time in colleges or universities compared with other students. On the other hand, students from non-English-speaking backgrounds were, compared with other students, less likely to be enrolled in part-time study.

One weakness of the *Youth in Transition* data presented in Table 7.1 is that there is no control for the effects of socioeconomic status on participation rates in tertiary education. Information on participation rates and in particular the interaction between socioeconomic status and participation in higher education is available from a study conducted by Anderson et al. (1978). Anderson et al. surveyed all students beginning undergraduate degrees in Australian higher education institutions in 1976, and provided information relating to the effects of specific social and immigrant backgrounds on participation in higher education. Over 5000 university students and a similar number of college students were surveyed. Table 7.2 provides details of the backgrounds of these students.

Students of immigrant origin were over-represented in the universities and metropolitan colleges in comparison with their representation in the age group. This conclusion held whether or not the families were of English-speaking origin. Differences in participation rates were also found according to faculty: education, law, and medicine were more likely to attract Australian-born students while in commerce and engineering the immigrant groups were represented to a much greater extent.

In examining the relationships between father's occupational background and country of birth, it was found that students of non-English-

Table 7.2 Father's Occupational Background and Country of Birth of Commencing Undergraduate Students in Australia, 1976

Father's country of birth	Father's occupation Professional %	Other %	Manual %	Not stated %	Total (N)
Universities					
Australia	31	46	16	8	3351
UK, Eire, NZ	31	36	24	9	699
Europe	15	42	35	8	629
Asia	25	57	7	11	249
Metropolitan colleges					
Australia	22	52	19	8	2311
UK, Eire, NZ	21	43	28	8	462
Europe	11	32	48	9	429
Asia	21	58	13	8	135
Country colleges					
Australia	16	53	21	10	1340
UK, Eire, NZ	25	43	22	10	134
Europe	13	39	39	10	85
Asia	50	17	24	6	18

Source: Anderson, Boven, Fensham, and Powell, 1978:98.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

speaking origin were much more likely to have a father who was a manual worker than were Australian students.

Support for the finding that ethnic groups were on average more likely to proceed to higher education, and that socioeconomic status was less a predictor of tertiary participation for ethnic students than other students, is also available from the recent reports by Elsworth et al. (1982) and Day and Elsworth (1981) who studied the transition from school to tertiary education in Victoria. Data were collected from the records of the Victorian Universities Admissions Committee (VUAC). Only students who were 24 years old or younger at the end of 1979, who had a home address in Victoria and who had received an offer of a place in an institution in 1979–80, were included in the study. A questionnaire was sent to a sample (slightly more than 10 per cent) of this population to obtain additional information not available on the VUAC files. The final achieved sample was approximately 1300 students selected to represent adequately the four types of decisions that students could make; that is, accept a full-time offer, accept a part-time offer, decline a final offer, or defer an offer. It should be noted that some of those students declining or deferring their final VUAC offer could have proceeded to tertiary education outside of the VUAC system and in fact some 30 per cent of these students were enrolled in either non-VUAC post-secondary or secondary courses. The ethnicity variable was based on the country of birth of the respondent's father and was, in fact, the same as that used in the ACER *Youth in Transition* study.

Immigrant Australians, especially those from ethnic groups, were less likely to decline offers of higher education places. After sex, ethnicity had the most important direct effect on the decision to accept a place. Indeed, part of the advantage with respect to higher education participation apparently enjoyed by urban students is due to this group including higher proportions of applicants from families with immigrant origins. The authors concluded:

> These findings are consistent with previous research which has suggested that the children of immigrants from continental Europe are better represented in higher education than would be predicted from their representation in the general population. (Elsworth et al., 1982:78)

Of course, as the authors have noted, the study does not indicate whether students from ethnic backgrounds were less selective or not when deciding to accept an offer. It may be that these students avoid applying, in the first place, for highly competitive courses where the chances of receiving a less preferred offer might be greater.

The interaction between socioeconomic status, ethnicity and the propensity to decline offers was strong. Within the immigrant group with non-English-speaking origins, status differences had far less effect on the decision to decline offers than was the case for the other groups. The effect of socioeconomic status for the immigrant group with English-speaking origins was the strongest.

Elsworth et al. (1982) concluded that factors either prior to or outside the educational experiences of immigrant Australians were the source of their commitment to higher education. In fact, the study suggested that there was little in the causal component of ethnicity that did not pass through mediating variables. In other words, the main reason for the relatively high proportions of ethnic students taking up offers lay in their perceptions and expectations of the benefits to be derived from education.

Day and Elsworth (1981) noted that part of the large effect of ethnicity on higher education participation was due to the fact that applicants from non-English-speaking backgrounds came on average from relatively small families. The applicants from non-English-speaking backgrounds were more likely to come from single-child families and were more likely to be 'oldest' children compared with other applicants. Day and Elsworth postulated that a generational effect was operating: the immigrant families were more likely to be at an earlier life-cycle stage than other families, and were likely to be younger families whose oldest children were reaching the age eligibility for tertiary places.

In examining participation in tertiary education it is important to consider the context in which student enrolments occur. As Burke and Davis (1984) have commented, in the late seventies and early eighties access to higher education was relatively easy, and students were generally more able to realize their aspirations. Since 1982 demand for full-time places in higher education has revived strongly and if this pattern continues, as appears likely, demand for places will exceed supply and those with marginal secondary school performances might be adversely affected. This is one reason for suggesting that the high representation of students from ethnic backgrounds in higher education over recent years is not guaranteed to continue over the rest of the decade.

Participation Rates in TAFE

A number of commentators have pointed to the difficulties of obtaining statistical data on TAFE and the relatively limited amount of research on the sector. As such, a clear picture of the representation of immigrant

Australians in TAFE is not easy to obtain. Some evidence concerning TAFE enrolments, now somewhat dated, is available from the 1975 Commonwealth Department of Education survey of students based on a 3 per cent sample of student enrolments drawn from a sample of institutions stratified according to state and geographical location (Commonwealth Department of Education, 1978). The achieved sample amounted to over 10,000 students. The survey indicated that in TAFE Streams 1 to 5 (i.e. excluding enrolments in leisure courses) the majority of students were of Anglo-Celtic origin with only 8 per cent born in non-English-speaking countries compared with an estimated 16 per cent of such persons aged 15 to 59 years in the Census. The figures for parents of students do not show as much Anglo-Celtic dominance, but there was still no evidence that immigrant Australians were over-represented in TAFE and, in fact, it seems that they were slightly under-represented.

The data presented earlier in Table 7.1 support the view that immigrant students, particularly those from ethnic backgrounds, are under-represented in TAFE. Since the good majority of TAFE students are enrolled on a part-time basis, it is the data on part-time study presented in that table that are most relevant to this discussion. As can be seen from that table, at ages 17 and 18 years the proportion of respondents engaged in 'part-time study and full-time employment' was markedly lower for those with fathers born in non-English-speaking countries than for those in the other two categories. Most of those engaged in this form of study would have been enrolled in TAFE institutions. Thus, although the participation rates amongst the three groups of respondents become much more even at the older age levels, the contention that, overall, ethnic students tend to be under-represented in TAFE is lent weight by the data in Table 7.1.

Of course, the term 'under-representation' warrants careful interpretation. It may be, as suggested by Burke and Davis (1984), in a discussion of the relatively low numbers of ethnic students in trade courses, that one reason for the relatively low representation of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds in TAFE is that the educational aspirations of these students and their families is more strongly oriented towards the higher education sector. Notwithstanding this, Burke and Davis go on to outline several factors that may work particularly against ethnic students who wish to enter trade courses:

- the usual requirement for persons entering apprenticeships to have entered the country at least by the age of 16;
- the inclusion in several apprenticeship selection processes of a test of word comprehension; and

- factors affecting personal contacts between families and employers.

There is additional evidence that if anything the representation of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds was even lower in the 'further education' component of TAFE than in the technical and trade courses. As observed by Anderson and Vervoorn (1983), immigrant Australians experiencing problems with English may be more willing to attempt a course leading to improved job prospects than to consider self-development and creative leisure activities in an alien tongue.

Across the TAFE sector as a whole, data based on the birthplace of students' mothers suggest that the different ethnic groups representing the major immigrant countries were fairly evenly distributed in line with their proportion in the population (Burke and Davis, 1984).

Academic Performance

There has been very little research which has examined the educational performance of immigrant Australians in tertiary education. One exception is a study in the early seventies by Fensham and Taft (1973), who compared the withdrawal rates of immigrant and non-immigrant students from higher education institutions. Overall, the immigrant group with non-English-speaking origins had a slightly higher rate of withdrawal, but considering that more of them were in colleges (which tended to have higher withdrawal rates) than universities, the overall rate of withdrawal (32 per cent) was considered to be lower than expected. Fensham and Taft also followed the progress of students in their tertiary studies and found that immigrant Australians were considerably over-represented among postgraduate students.

Other data on performance collected in the early seventies relate to second-year engineering students in Victorian colleges of advanced education (Horne, 1970, 1974). In the first study, it was found that of the three main immigrant groups studied (European-born, British-born, and Asian-born) only the Asian students performed significantly worse than their Australian counterparts. It was also found that there were fewer scholarship holders amongst the immigrant groups. In a follow-up study (Horne, 1974), performance was judged by the completion of the course, and the difference between the groups found in the earlier study no longer held. In the earlier study the average performance of the immigrant Australian group was low, principally because of the relatively poor performance by Asian students. In fact, in the follow-up study the Asian-born group had the best record of the immigrant students over the whole course.

However, this group as well as the United Kingdom group did take somewhat longer to complete their courses than the Australian and European students. There were no significant differences in the proportions of the different groups completing their qualifications with distinction, although fewer United Kingdom students did so.

More recent information on the achievements of immigrant Australians is available from the evaluation of the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme, which examined factors related to student attrition in tertiary education (Beswick et al., 1983). With respect to immigrant groups, it was concluded:

> If anything, those from less advantageous backgrounds, especially the children of immigrants, were more likely to persist. (Beswick et al., 1983:10–11)

Summary

The high aspirations that ethnic groups hold for education generally is carried through to their aspirations for tertiary education. More so than for other groups in the community, these aspirations were less likely to be shaped by socioeconomic background. Different immigrant groups held contrasting preferences, but on the whole aspirations extended more to universities and colleges than to other types of institutions and not surprisingly, preference was generally displayed by the immigrant groups for study in metropolitan institutions.

There is some limited evidence that ethnic groups may suffer some disadvantages with respect to advice received at school and in the quality of school-home contacts, but how this may affect their knowledge of post-school opportunities is difficult to discern. It did appear that the generally high educational aspirations of immigrant groups made it less likely for financial considerations to be judged a major barrier to tertiary participation than is the case for Australian students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds.

Recent data indicated that students from non-English-speaking backgrounds were far more likely to be enrolled in full-time study than were other students and were more likely to be enrolled in universities or colleges than TAFE institutions. These students were also more likely to be enrolled full-time as opposed to part-time and within TAFE they were less likely to be enrolled in trade courses. Although it had been shown in earlier studies that certain ethnic groups were less likely to proceed to tertiary education, for example southern European immigrants (especially females), it appeared that the lower socioeconomic ethnic groups were more likely to continue their education than were similar groups of

Australians or immigrants from English-speaking backgrounds. It is important to note that policies which restrict the growth of tertiary places may alter this pattern somewhat.

Although little research on the area has been conducted, there is no evidence that immigrant students perform any less well than other students in their tertiary studies.

8 : IMMIGRANT GROUPS AND THE TRANSITION TO WORK

This chapter is concerned with two general areas: how immigrant Australians approach the transition from school or tertiary education to work, and how well the educational achievements of immigrant Australians translate into vocational outcomes. The chapter is particularly interested in the ways in which the educational experiences of immigrant Australians shape their knowledge of, and access to, employment opportunities.

Immigrant Groups and their Approach to Work

Vocational Aspirations

Taft (1975b) has shown that the pattern of occupational aspirations expressed by immigrant Australian students was quite similar to their educational aspirations. Males from non-English-speaking backgrounds aspired to higher occupational levels than did the Australian-born, while there were similar levels of aspiration for the females of these two groups. Concerning specific national groups, Taft found that Greek and Yugoslav working class respondents (both male and female) had higher vocational aspirations than comparable Australians. Also, working-class Italian males had higher aspirations than Australians but the Italian females from this socioeconomic grouping had lower aspirations than any other eth-class group. Generally, female aspirations were lower than male ones but this tendency was reversed in the case of Greek working-class respondents, and in the case of German/Dutch respondents from all socioeconomic groups combined (numbers were too small to analyse this group by different socioeconomic categories).

Comparing the different groups' vocational aspirations with their educational ones, Taft found that the educational aspirations of Italian girls were lower than their occupational designs. Strangely, perhaps, German/Dutch males had higher educational aspirations than vocational but the opposite was the case for the girls. Maltese students had very high occupational aspirations—far in excess of their educational ones—but the analyses did not separate male and females. Male and female Jewish students had both high educational and occupational aspirations.

Other more recent studies support the contention that immigrant groups have relatively high occupational aspirations. For example, Poole (1981a) compared the occupational aspirations of second-generation immigrant students and their parents with their Australian-born counterparts. Immigrant Australians were more likely to aspire to professional and skilled work than were the Australians. Both immigrant and Australian students perceived that their parents held high aspirations for them with slightly higher proportions of Australian parents being perceived as aspiring to professional work and slightly higher proportions of the parents of immigrant Australians being perceived as aspiring to skilled work.

With respect to specific ethnic groups, the study by Marjoribanks (1980) indicated that Greek and Italian families had the highest occupational aspirations for their children, and next highest were the aspirations of the Anglo-Australian middle-status families. However, the Anglo-Australian lower-status families had the second lowest aspirational level of all the eth-classes with the English immigrant group having the lowest.

In another study of aspirations, Meade (1983) from a sample of 3000 Year 9 students in 16 Sydney schools found that a marginally higher proportion of students from families of non-English-speaking origin aspired to jobs in the upper professional category than both students from families born overseas in English-speaking countries and students with Australian-born parents. Variations, however, occurred among ethnic subgroups. Fewer Maltese and Italian students aspired to the professional occupational category than did Lebanese and children of parents born in other non-English-speaking countries. On the other hand, the Lebanese had the highest proportion aspiring to the lower status jobs. Of those students who remained at school at least until Year 11, not surprisingly perhaps, a greater proportion aspired to jobs in the highest occupational status category than was the case for Year 9 students. Boys' aspirations were generally higher than girls. The aspirations of students of non-English-speaking origins in Year 11 (especially those of Greek origin) were higher than the Australian students or students of English-speaking origins.

More detailed information on the occupational aspirations of Turkish, Lebanese, Greek, and Italian school leavers is available from two other studies. Young et al. (1980) examined the job aspirations of Turkish, Lebanese, and Australian youth in Melbourne and Sydney. The study showed considerable gaps between what sorts of jobs were available and the areas in which the youth would like to be working. Few of those working in jobs such as labouring, cleaning, and packing wished to remain in those jobs; more would have liked to move into lower professional work, own a small business, perform clerical, motor mechanic, metal or other trade work, or become drivers. To some extent the job aspirations of the Turkish and Lebanese youth reflected their aversion to the sorts of jobs they had been forced to take. The Turkish and Lebanese had a somewhat greater concern with the prospects for advancement and becoming self-employed or an employer, and a stronger preference for manual or mechanical work, than was the case for the Australian youth.

The second study (Young et al., 1983) contrasted the job aspirations of Greek, Italian, and Anglo-Australian respondents who had originally left full-time education without obtaining skills sufficient for any area of skilled employment. Some two-thirds of these young people were in favour of further training which indicated that their first jobs might not reflect their aspirations. These data reinforce the need for post-school opportunities to participate in education and training programs.

Immigrant Groups and their Knowledge of Work Opportunities

Sturman (1979) has reviewed Australian research concerning students' knowledge about work or career opportunities available to them. However, few studies have specifically examined immigrant groups in this regard, and it is therefore difficult to determine whether their experiences differ from those reported in other, more general studies.

Meade (1981) has analysed students' comments about the provision of career education and Meade (1983), as part of the same study, has described steps taken by parents to obtain information about careers. Included in these analyses were data on immigrant groups. Almost half of the parents from non-English-speaking countries had taken no concrete steps to obtain information concerning occupations suitable for their children compared with 24 per cent for the overseas-born parents from English-speaking countries and 17 per cent for the Australian-born parents. Language difficulties, lack of business contacts, and lack of knowledge of available sources were considered to have hindered immigrant parents from non-English-speaking countries from providing practical help to assist their children to realize the high educational and occupational aspirations they held for them. There were no major variations among the separate ethnic subgroups in the proportions of parents who had not taken any concrete steps to obtain vocational information.

Two further studies directed at specific national groups have also provided useful information concerning student knowledge of work opportunities. In their study of Turkish and Lebanese youth, Young et al. (1980) found that both immigrant and Australian youth believed that they would benefit from more career advice at school. The greatest perceived need occurred, however, among the immigrant Australians. Many of these children were guided solely by parents and relatives in the choice of jobs and were unaware of the opportunities which might exist outside of this narrow information field. In some cases, also, it seemed that parents had unrealistically high expectations for their children. There seems therefore to be a strong need to involve the parents more directly in the careers counselling programs provided by secondary schools.

This study also indicated that knowledge of English had far-reaching effects on the transition from school to work, particularly with regard to awareness of jobs available, prospects for further training, and opportunities to use skills acquired overseas. Knowledge of English improved the ability to communicate with employment agencies, and provided access to wider sources of information about job opportunities.

The second study (Young et al., 1983) focused upon the experiences of Greek and Italian youth. Approximately 350 interviews were conducted with male and female immigrants and Anglo-Australians residing in two areas of Melbourne. One area served the more recent settlers and the other was an area which had largely been settled by earlier arrivals as well as one into which many newly married younger arrivals had moved. Almost one-third of the respondents had received no career advice from school. The lack of career advice was particularly evident for females. The extent of the teachers' advice seemed to be little affected by whether the respondent had worked part-time while at school, left school part-way through the year, or had been encouraged to remain at school.

Immigrant Groups and Vocational Attainment

The focus of this section is upon the manner in which educational attainments are translated into vocational outcomes and whether this process differs from one group to another. At a general level, research has established the strong positive association between educational attainment and future vocational attainment (Broom, Jones, McDonnell, and Williams, 1980). Although this general relationship has been shown to hold for immigrant groups as a whole, it is not easy to summarize and clarify the research specifically related to immigrant Australians.

The ACER longitudinal study (Williams et al., 1980) examined the *career beginnings of early school leavers*. The young people concerned were aged 17 and had left school before Year 12. The study showed that early school leavers among the immigrant group with parents born in English-speaking countries experienced less satisfaction with their first job, were more likely to have some unemployment, and expected to have somewhat higher status jobs in five years than their Australian-born counterparts. On the other hand, the early school leavers whose parents were born in non-English-speaking countries had stayed at school longer, were more likely to have attempted further study, and planned on doing more further study than their Australian-born counterparts. However, respondents in this group on average did take a little more than a month longer to get a job after leaving school relative to the Australian-born students. Those with fathers from non-English-speaking backgrounds were also less likely to have suffered unemployment compared with the English-speaking group, but more likely to have, compared with the Australian-born. The authors considered that the fact that the immigrant group with non-English-speaking backgrounds took longer to find a job was probably language-related. They speculated, also, that some of the differences between groups may have occurred because the study possibly underestimated parental occupation and educational attainment in the non-English-speaking group: the current occupational status of immigrant parents may be lower than the status they had in their country of birth.

Table 8.1 presents recent unpublished data from the ACER *Youth in Transition* study which updates some of these findings. It is important to note that the table does not control for socioeconomic background. These data indicate that, as those respondents whose parents were born in non-English-speaking countries move from education into the labour force, they are as likely to be engaged in professional and white-collar work as those whose parents were born in English-speaking countries or in Australia. On the other hand, they were also likely to have slightly larger proportions in the unskilled and semi-skilled categories.

The studies of Turkish and Lebanese youth (Young et al., 1980) and of Greek and Italian youth (Young et al., 1983) emphasize the importance of avoiding generalization in discussions of the vocational experiences of immigrant Australians. It emerged from both Census and survey data that although an increased level of schooling raised the probability of gaining a reasonable job, the improvement was relatively less among the Turkish youth. Also, whereas a better knowledge of English helped in gaining a non-factory or non-labouring job, it did not

Table 8.1 Labour Force Participation of a Sample of Young People Classified by Father's Birthplace, 1978-1982[a]

	1978			1979			1980			1981			1982		
Respondent's age	17 years			18 years			19 years			20 years			21 years		
	Father's birthplace			Father's birthplace			Father's birthplace			Father's birthplace			Father's birthplace		
	A %	E %	NE %	A %	E %	NE %	A %	E %	NE %	A %	E %	NE %	A %	E %	NE %
Full-time work –															
Professional	1	–	–	4	3	2	8	7	6	7	6	5	10	13	11
Managerial	–	–	1	1	1	–	1	1	2	3	2	2	3	3	3
White collar	13	13	11	20	21	19	23	24	20	23	29	27	23	22	24
Apprenticeship	8	10	3	10	12	6	10	9	7	7	5	6	2	3	3
Skilled	5	5	3	4	3	4	4	7	3	8	7	5	10	13	6
Semi-skilled	10	8	6	11	8	9	9	6	9	11	11	12	11	8	13
Unskilled	7	7	6	9	11	8	11	12	9	11	11	13	10	10	12
nec[b]	3	1	2	4	4	4	4	3	5	–	1	1	1	–	2
Part-time work –															
Full-time study	8	11	11	4	5	5	3	6	3	6	6	6	4	2	5
Part-time study	–	–	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	–
No study	4	5	2	4	2	3	4	4	4	5	4	2	6	7	2
Unemployed	–	–	–	4	4	5	5	5	5	6	3	4	7	6	5
Not in labour force	42	40	57	25	24	36	17	15	27	12	13	20	12	13	15
Total	2403	360	529	2392	361	535	2446	362	525	2169	303	475	1897	256	391

Source: Unpublished material from the ACER *Youth in Transition* study.

[a] A = Australian-born, E = born overseas in an English-speaking country, and NE = born overseas in a non-English-speaking country.

[b] nec—not elsewhere classified.

necessarily assist a great deal in lessening the overall chances of unemployment. Greek school leavers appear particularly likely to be unemployed. This difference might have been a result of the higher proportion of overseas-born respondents in the Greek sample.

The relatively successful transition between education and work made by young immigrant Australians in the *Youth in Transition* study is not as evident for adult immigrant Australians. For example, on the basis of a national sample survey in 1973 of nearly 5000 Australian men and women aged between 30 and 69 years, Broom et al. (1980) showed that the immigrant group as a whole was significantly less successful in converting years of basic education into first job status than the Australian-born group. As a high proportion of the overseas-born group had started work overseas, they argued that the varying influence of basic education on first job status represented a complex mix of social processes, not simply or even primarily job discrimination by Australian employers. It was also found that:

- current job status for the group born in a non-English-speaking country was less strongly tied to first job. This suggests that migration was a major disruption to career, in part because of the importance of language skills in job placement and the greater difficulty of having overseas qualifications recognized in Australia.
- the immigrant group had lower average current occupational status and income than the Australian-born group. However, the findings indicated that to the extent that discrimination occurred it did not affect income as much as the range of jobs immigrant Australians were able to enter.

A considerable number of other studies concerned with immigrant Australians in the workforce exist. It is worth noting that most of these studies do not attempt to estimate differences in effects of education on employment between first- and second-generation Australian immigrants. Common findings from these studies were that immigrant Australians from non-English-speaking countries, either on average or disaggregated to certain groups, were more likely to suffer unemployment (Stricker and Sheehan, 1981; Miller, 1982; Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission, 1983a; 1983b; 1984b; Chapman and Miller, 1984), were more likely to occupy low status positions (Miller, 1982; Chapman and Miller, 1984), and were more likely to have been adversely affected by structural changes in the economy (Storer, 1979; Stricker and Sheehan, 1981; Bonnell and Dixon, 1983; Kriegler and Sloan, 1984). Certain groups, such as females from a number of national backgrounds and new settlers, suffered particular disadvantages in the labour market (Williams, 1979; Fisher, 1982; Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission, 1983c; Alcorso, 1984; Chapman and Miller, 1984; Inglis and Stromback, 1984). On the other hand, it also is evident that a number of ethnic groups had higher levels of labour force participation than Australians (Miller, 1982; Inglis and Stromback, 1984), that income differentials between immigrants and Australians were small (Miller, 1982), and that differences between these groups on various factors related to work narrowed in relation to the period of residence of the immigrant Australians (Young et al., 1983; Chapman and Miller, 1984; Inglis and Stromback, 1984).

Summary

Generally, it was found that the immigrant Australians from non-English-speaking backgrounds had relatively high occupational aspirations. However, within the immigrant group, the occupational aspirations of females were generally lower and this was particularly noticeable among the Italian girls in one major study. As was the case with educational aspirations, occupational aspirations were less closely linked to socioeconomic status for ethnic groups than other groups in the Australian population.

Ethnic groups may have received less vocational advice from schools than other groups, and appear to have been more dependent upon their parents for advice than were other groups.

At a very general level, the research showed the importance that educational achievement had with respect to later vocational attainments, and research into immigrant groups confirmed that this relationship was still very important. On the other hand, in attempting to compare immigrant Australians and Australians in the extent to which they were successful in transferring educational achievement into vocational attainment, the research was difficult to summarize.

Many studies of young school leavers have not allowed for the fact that immigrant Australians are more likely to have continued their education beyond compulsory schooling, and studies of older immigrant Australians are complicated by the fact that their education and qualifications may have been obtained overseas. The ACER longitudinal study is likely to provide useful information over the next few years: results to date show little difference in occupational attainments of different samples classified by father's birthplace. Other cross-sectional studies have, however, suggested otherwise.

It is possible that immigrants arriving in Australia with overseas education and qualifications have in the past had these experiences undervalued in Australia, whereas those immigrants who have been educated in Australian schools have been able to compete without disadvantage in the workforce. Part of the process of devaluing immigrant qualifications may have been related to language difficulties that certain individuals or groups possessed. To the extent that research has shown that the act of migration was a disruption to the careers of immigrants, there is support for this view. A more depressing outlook is to suggest that although immigrant school leavers may not be disadvantaged in the transition to work, adult immigrants are. The continuing data flow from the *Youth in Transition* study may assist in evaluating this suggestion. Certainly, research has suggested that the changes in the structure of the economy have hit ethnic groups hardest but it is not possible to ascertain whether this is solely related to the socioeconomic backgrounds and job concentrations of immigrant Australians or whether other factors are operating to disadvantage immigrant workers.

9 : DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A balanced discussion of whether or not educational or vocational disadvantage exists for immigrant Australians requires consideration of a number of elements. Although comparisons of immigrant groups with the Australian-born, or comparisons between the different immigrant groups, along certain measured outcomes such as educational participation rates, educational performance, occupational status, or employment participation rates, might offer one important perspective, this alone is insufficient. Individual members of immigrant groups bring to their vocational and educational experiences different levels of motivation, different attitudes, and different aspirational levels. Although these aspirations may not always reflect the reality of an individual's ability or the reality of available opportunities, disadvantage should be judged not only in absolute terms but in relative terms, that is, relative to the desires and attributes of individuals and their families. Disadvantage should also be judged by the quality of the educational or vocational experiences offered to individuals or groups. It is through examination of the attitudes of individuals and groups that knowledge about the perceptions of this quality can be ascertained.

One important aspect of this issue (discussed in some detail in the introductory chapters) relates to the assimilation of immigrant groups into Australian society. The current dominant ideology pertaining to the treatment of immigrant groups is multiculturalism. Implicit in the debate on multiculturalism and the schools' response is that groups are disadvantaged relevant to their host country if certain elements of curriculum are denied them and also that the host country itself is disadvantaged by being denied the richness of the cultural heritage that other countries can bring to the educational experience. One of the issues at stake here relates to the control over the definition, distribution, and evaluation of knowledge. Which groups should determine curriculum content, to whom should different curricula be taught, and how should the value of different curricula be appraised? By examining research into the educational attitudes of members of immigrant groups, it was hoped that some contribution to this debate could be made.

Another important aspect of disadvantage relates to access to educational experiences. Are there facets of the characteristics of immigrant groups, or of the response of schools to them, that might affect educational access? Although much of the nature of access to educational opportunities is determined at a macro level and is likely to affect all groups or individuals to a similar extent, other aspects, such as the knowledge that different individuals have of opportunities, the willingness of different groups to undergo financial or other hardships to pursue these opportunities, or the expectations that teachers have of students, may have cultural components to them.

This chapter draws together conclusions suggested by the available research concerning this extended concept of disadvantage. Of course, the extent to which it is possible to draw such conclusions depends upon the quality and the range of the original research reviewed and, therefore, it is useful to make some preliminary comments concerning how research has approached issues concerned with immigrant Australians.

Research on Immigrant Australians

Although there have been many Australian studies which have touched upon issues of relevance to the educational or vocational experiences of immigrant groups, there have been very few sophisticated studies which have focused specifically upon these groups. Another major problem with the research is that rarely is there a distinction made between first- and second-generation immigrant Australians. Although it would not be unreasonable to assume that the attainments of immigrant Australians whose first educational or vocational experiences occurred outside of Australia might be different from those who have received all their education in this country, most research has failed to make this distinction. This is a particular problem in attempting to assess information concerning vocational attainment. Partly as a result of the failure to distinguish new settlers from other immigrants, it would be true to say that research has not kept pace with the changing patterns of immigration and settlement described at the beginning of this review.

As a result, the complex interaction of factors that may affect the present experiences of immigrant groups has not been fully analysed and, as immigrant Australians have generally not been specially sampled, research has usually aggregated different immigrant groups. The most common grouping has resulted in a distinction between immigrants from non-English-speaking backgrounds, immigrants from English-speaking backgrounds, and Australians. Although research has not always been consistent with the definitions involved (a student's birthplace may be used, a father's or mother's birthplace may be used, or language spoken in the home may be used instead of actual birthplace), this three-fold distinction is a meaningful one to the extent that those with English-speaking backgrounds were generally far more like the Australians in aspects examined in this review than were those from non-English-speaking backgrounds. On the other hand, it was not uncommon to find that there were significant differences between countries classified together as non-English-speaking and quite often these differences were as great as, if not greater than, differences which existed between the major groups themselves. In fact, these variations can be so great that it is questionable whether such a broad classification is useful.

It has already been noted that a number of studies represent the ethnicity variable by reference to language usage. It is not unreasonable to presume that language proficiency is an important variable affecting educational and occupational achievements, but it must be noted that a broad language classification does not necessarily capture language proficiency. Within the 'non-English-speaking' group there exist students and parents whose proficiency in English ranges from poor to excellent. In addition, although the immigrant group with English-speaking backgrounds might be considered to be more homogeneous than the 'non-English-speaking' group, it would be unwise to minimize the cultural variations within the first group, and it would be unwise to assume that these cultural variations would not affect educational aspirations, attainments, or achievements. For example, a number of international studies have shown that educational participation rates between different English-speaking countries vary greatly (see, for example, Comber and Keeves, 1973; Karmel, 1981), and that some of those differences could be related to national attitudes towards education.

Research has most often used father's birthplace as the basis of classifications. However, there are arguments for using other bases. For example, Blandy and Goldsworthy (1975) in their South Australian study chose the student's place of birth because of the potential importance of the 'state of mind' of being born in Australia or being an immigrant on students' educational achievements. Also, Price and Pyne (1976) have argued that it is the mother's influence that is more important than the father's in determining the cultural and linguistic habits of the family and therefore studies should take account of the mother's birthplace.

A further weakness of much of the research relates to methodological design. Ideally, in a study examining factors that affect students' progress within and beyond the educational system, a longitudinal design is most appropriate. However, such studies are complex, expensive, and time-consuming. As a result, most research has been cross-sectional.

The value of cross-sectional studies depends upon the extent to which they can unravel the complexity of factors influencing student experiences; that is, their multivariate nature. Not all the research reviewed has employed adequate multivariate techniques and consequently the results from such studies often provide somewhat limited information.

However, even where appropriate multivariate techniques have been used, some of the complexities of the interactions of the factors measured have still not been unravelled. Perhaps the best example of this concerns the interrelationship between socioeconomic groupings and ethnicity. Research has shown that although, in general, social position seems to be a major factor, and probably the most important factor, affecting students' educational experiences, the attitudes and values of individuals belonging to certain socioeconomic groupings within ethnic groups quite often differ from those of similar groups within the Australian population. There are a number of possible interpretations of this finding. It may be that the measurement of socioeconomic status within different ethnic groups is unreliable because many highly educated immigrants to Australia have to take relatively low status jobs. On the other hand, it may be that the use of a socioeconomic status variable to capture the complexities of interactions within different social groupings is in itself an unsuitable procedure. Connell et al. (1982) argued that classes in contemporary Australia are not clear cut and easily delineated: they are complex and internally-divided groupings. Students may bring to schools their parents' cultural capital but it should not be assumed that this necessarily fixes their outcomes and it should not necessarily be assumed that parents' values and attitudes harmonize into an easily described social group.

However, the differences found between ethnic groups and Australians in connection with the relationship between socioeconomic status and educational attitudes may be real and of significant interest. The attitudes and values of socioecomic classes within different ethnic groups may be vastly different to one another and to those of Australians. This difference may relate to some cultural facets or it may relate to the process of migration itself: immigrants generally may possess attitudes and values which are different to the average resident of their country of origin. It is possible that one difference may relate to the desire for educational or occupational mobility.

In general, the research reviewed has not been able to unravel the complexities of the interrelationship of social class and ethnicity and therefore it is not surprising that it has also failed to unravel even more complex interrelationships such as the added effect of gender upon ethnicity and social groupings. Research suggests that this added effect is a significant one but how it impinges on life chances for different ethnic groups and different social groupings is unclear.

Are Immigrant Groups Disadvantaged in Australia?

Unfortunately, in my view, given the weaknesses and gaps in the research evidence, no clear resolution of this issue is possible. Little is known about issues of access to opportunities both at the educational and vocational level, and insufficient information exists about immigrant groups' perceptions of their educational needs.

Although at the levels of primary and secondary schooling it appears that ethnic groups approach their schooling somewhat differently and receive somewhat different experiences from those of Australians, representing perhaps a complex interplay between sex, class, and ethnicity, it is impossible to conclude from the research evidence that these circumstances translate into substantial educational inequalities. Although the ethnic groups appeared to have slightly lower performances at primary and secondary school (mainly, it seems, as a result of language difficulties), in terms of retentivity and post-secondary educational participation and performance, ethnic students were on average highly successful in translating their, and their parents', positive attitudes towards education into satisfactory outcomes. In fact, recent evidence would suggest that students from non-English-speaking backgrounds on average were more likely to proceed to higher education institutions than other groups. They were, however, less likely to proceed to TAFE institutions. It should be mentioned that if access to higher education becomes more difficult, which appears likely, marginal students including those from ethnic backgrounds will be adversely affected.

With respect to research into the attitudes of immigrant Australian students or parents towards multicultural education policies, the evidence pointed to the necessity, underlined by Jayasuriya (1984), of thinking differently about the needs of first- and later-generation immigrant Australians. However, while Jayasuriya saw multiculturalism being used to meet the needs of new arrivals, research evidence indicated that it was not in general the new arrivals who saw the need for multicultural aspects to the curriculum. Rather, new arrivals were more concerned with what might be called survival skills, such as English proficiency, and it was later-generation immigrant Australians who were more likely to support multicultural aspects of curricula including language maintenance. It would seem that these later-generation immigrant Australians—at least those from certain ethnic groups—were acknowledging that, in the process of adapting to the demands of Australian society, they had neglected much of their cultural heritage.

In summary, with respect to the educational experiences of immigrant Australians, although there is a lack of data relating to certain aspects of disadvantage, in connection with educational outcomes (participation and performance) there is no indication that the immigrant groups are disadvantaged in Australian society.

At the vocational level, however, the evidence is more complex. Research has shown that young immigrant Australians moving from education in Australia to work are not disadvantaged at this stage in their vocational attainments. On the other hand, adult immigrants are more likely to be found in the lower-status occupational positions. It would seem that this evidence provides ammunition for those who wish to argue that immigrant Australians are disadvantaged in their life chances, as well as evidence for those who would argue such disadvantage is likely to diminish with time. How should these findings be interpreted?

Jayasuriya (1984) has argued that evidence of 'instances of individual mobility' as documented in some studies does not substantiate changes in class position. Of these instances of mobility, he argued:

> They are status changes and occupational or income shifts which often indicate horizontal rather than vertical mobility. It is misleading to suggest that the data in this area substantiates an extensive degree of lower class upward mobility, particularly in relation to ethnic minorities. (Jayasuriya, 1984:11)

Without entering into a debate on how many cases of 'individual mobility' are needed to represent an extensive degree of lower-class upward mobility in Australian society, the interesting point drawn out by Jayasuriya is his concern with changes in the position of the group. This inter-relationship between ethnicity and social class, as well as their interaction with gender, is the key to an interpretation of ethnic disadvantage.

It would seem likely, in fact, that the position of adult immigrant Australians with respect to their vocational attainments can be explained to a large extent by their socioeconomic backgrounds and the level of skills they possessed in their countries of origin. Data from the Population Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (United Nations, 1982) concerning the occupational skills of male settlers in Australia revealed quite clearly that the great majority of immigrants from non-English-speaking countries were far more likely to be unskilled than was the case of Australians in the workforce. It should therefore come as no surprise to find that these immigrant Australians are more likely to occupy the lower-status positions in Australian society, and that because of their concentration in certain industries they are more likely to be subject to structural changes in the economy.

It is not being argued here that the research evidence is able to determine that no disadvantage specific to ethnic groups exists. The evidence does not enable such an assessment. No doubt where social class disadvantage is compounded with other cultural or gender disadvantages, the position of these individuals would become intolerable by any reasonable standards. However, research tells us very little about cultural disadvantage and rather it suggests social class disadvantage. The extent to which social class disadvantage will persist over time or will diminish depends upon the levels of skills of future immigrants to Australia. The emergence of cultural disadvantage as a major problem in Australia depends upon whether young immigrant Australians who are moving into the workforce with what seems to be reasonable success at the present will continue to have that success.

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This review examines the educational experiences of immigrant Australians. By reviewing research in this area Andrew Sturman describes how immigrant Australians approach education, how educational institutions respond to immigrant groups, and how well they perform in schools and tertiary education. By comparing the educational experiences of immigrants and other groups in Australian society, and by discussing the concept of disadvantage in education, the author contributes to the debate on educational inequality.

Andrew Sturman has been a Senior Research Officer at the Australian Council for Educational Research [illegible]. Earlier he worked as a criminological research officer at the Home Office in London. He is the author of publications on vandalism, the transition from school to work, [illegible] organizational structures.

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